



**Administration for Children and Families**

Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Improving Service Delivery to Youth in the Child Welfare System

HHS-2011-ACF-ACYF-CW-0186

Application Due Date: 07/19/2011

# Improving Service Delivery to Youth in the Child Welfare System

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**Department of Health & Human Services  
Administration for Children & Families**

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**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to support the effective implementation of strategies to help youth at risk of aging out or who are 18-21 and still involved with the child welfare system to develop skills to strengthen and manage relationships with biological family members and other important individuals in their lives. These strategies will facilitate reunification, when safe and appropriate, or other legal permanency for older youth in foster care (including those who enter care at age 16 or older), and promote a healthy transition to adulthood.

While achieving permanency is an important result of this FOA, the critical part of the work is to develop, implement, and support a framework or practice model to promote protective mechanisms in youth that allows for increased capacity and skills to build and maintain lasting healthy relationships. The target population will be determined by the applicant's detailed data analysis, but older children and youth must be between 10 and 21, and in foster care, or young adults who have aged out but are still involved with the foster care system.

Projects funded will be expected to:

- (1) Increase reunification or other permanency for youth who are at risk of aging out of the foster care system;
- (2) Build protective mechanisms (i.e. self-regulation, coping, and self-efficacy) and factors with youth to promote relational competencies and the ability to successfully seek out environments and social settings that support their own positive development now and in the future;
- (3) Demonstrate effective strategies to promote connecting youth with adults in a long-lasting and meaningful way;
- (4) Develop models or strategies of youth relational competency, youth leadership, employment and educational achievement;
- (5) Evaluate the processes and outcomes of these strategies and models; and

Each project will serve as a "learning laboratory" producing knowledge about capacity-building and effective practices in the coordination and delivery of services to young people in foster care. These lessons will inform practice, program, and policies at the local, State, and national levels.

## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **Statutory Authority**

The legislative authority is Promoting Safe and Stable Families, Sec 436(b)(1) of the Social Security Act.

## **Description**

### **Background**

The Administration on Children, Youth, and Families will be focusing in the coming years on defining and improving the overall well-being of children and families served by the child welfare system. Well-being can be conceptualized as improvements in social and emotional functioning that allow children to be successful during childhood and into adulthood, and ensuring families have the ability to create secure and responsive environments. Core components of well-being include having:

- Healthy Development (being on target developmentally and getting back on target when needed);
- Protective Mechanisms (self-regulation, coping, self-esteem, self-efficacy)
- Resiliency (healing, recovery, elasticity);
- Relational Competency (positive connections and attachments with peers and adults); and
- Protective Factors (parental resilience, knowledge of parenting and child development, social connections, concrete support in times of need, child's social and emotional development).

These components are foundational to ensuring that children are successful at home, in school, at work, and in the community now and as adults. It is important, however, that the core components of well-being be understood in the context of children who experience multiple adverse and traumatic life experiences because what is currently known about healthy development, protective mechanisms, relational competency and resiliency may not fully address the needs of this population of children. The work contemplated in this funding opportunity announcement is designed to not only develop protective mechanisms and resiliency through the use of relational competency, but to also improve overall well-being in this particular context so that safety and permanency can be achieved.

All youth in the transition to adulthood need to develop skills to manage and strengthen relationships with supportive, caring adults and peers. The majority of youth in U.S. society develop these skills by experiencing opportunities and building relationships organically through normal experiences of adolescence with the support of a stable, supportive, and nurturing family. Youth in the foster care system often do not have a large and diverse network of supportive adults, including family, who can help guide and ease the transition to adulthood. Youth, because of their foster care status "may miss out on normative opportunities to build important relational and social skills that can be essential to accessing and sustaining the very relationships research suggests are essential"(Samuels, 2008, p.3). These opportunities are critical to the building of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Examples of places where youth develop skills in building relationships with adults and peers include:

- Afterschool activities;
- Early or summer employment opportunities;
- Volunteer work;
- Church or other community activities;
- Neighborhood and family activities; and
- Relationships with extended kin or family.

However, the primary relationship for most youth transitioning to adulthood continues to be with their parents.

A study conducted by Susan Kools (1997) suggested that youth in foster care should have access to activities that promote the normal development of identity. While many child welfare agencies have moved to enact policies and legislation to ensure that youth in foster care are allowed to participate in the same age-appropriate activities (sleepovers, ability to obtain employment, afterschool activities) as their peers without unrealistic restrictions (such as background checks), there are still activities that many youth in foster care do not participate in because of their foster care status (e.g., obtaining a driver's license

before the age of emancipation). As a marker of the transition to adulthood, "foster youth experience the drive for autonomy and for progressively greater freedom" the same as their peers (Courtney, Skyles, Miranda, Zinn, Howards & Goerge, 2005, p. 4). But "unlike other teens, their environment often offers little safety for experimentation and little flexibility to accommodate individual preferences. They are, moreover, often missing the linchpin of normalcy that is assumed to offer some inoculation against the hazards of the street - a nurturing and supportive family" (Courtney et al., 2005, pg. 4).

Recent research about youth aging out of foster care explores the complex relationship between independence, dependence, and interdependence for youth who have been in foster care. Many youth indicate that foster care forced them to grow up faster, and that because of their family situation prior to entering foster care, they are more mature than their peers (Samuels & Pryce, 2008). Furthermore, youth in one study indicated that they were "equally concerned that becoming too dependent on the foster care system seriously risked one's adult independence" (Samuels & Pryce, 2008, p.1201). Navigating the complex relationship between asking for support (after aging out of foster care) and transitioning to adulthood (self-reliance) is different for youth in the foster care system (Samuels & Pryce, 2008). Therefore, there is a need to learn how to work with youth to engage them in the services without making them feel like they are unable to manage independence.

In the last 20 years, greater attention has been placed on the mechanisms that protect people when faced with adversity. Risk is a part of childhood and adolescent development and all children and youth need skills and mechanisms to negotiate risk. In one study conducted by Norman Garmezy, three sets of protective factors are identified as critical to risk negotiation and coping: (1) specific features of the child's personality (i.e. self-esteem), (2) family cohesion, and (3) external support systems (Rutter, 1987). While some children and youth are able to overcome multiple adverse life experiences, others are not able to successfully cope; furthermore, this can vary by circumstance as some resiliency mechanisms may only assist in coping for some risk factors (Rutter, 1987). As children develop and mature, their life experiences can start to differ from others. Protective factors and resiliency mechanisms are different for older children and youth.

Some older children and youth in foster care are better able to navigate the foster care system, while in foster care and after they transition to a permanent family or adulthood. While there are some factors or mechanisms of resiliency that may be easily identified that protect against risk, how these protective factors operate in children and youth in the foster care system is largely unknown. It is also clear that the reduction of risk is critical, and that even within a sibling group not all children are at equal risk (Rutter, 1987). Some factors of resiliency include the ability to cope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal relationships, task accomplishment, and opportunities. These concepts have specific implications with in the context of foster care, including:

- Do youth in foster care believe they will attend and complete college?
- Are youth allowed to participate in normal adolescent activities?
- How are youth in foster care allowed to accomplish tasks leading to self-esteem and self-efficacy?

Even when the foster care system teaches young adults how to live on their own, in terms of skills development (cooking, cleaning, writing a check, signing a lease, etc.), it is rare that the system is willing or able to teach young adults how to manage the evolution of complex relationships throughout one's life course. While any youth may be at risk or unable to manage certain relationships, the risk factors that are part of growing-up in foster care make the protective factors of resiliency even more critical if youth are to weather the transition to adulthood.

Developing skills to self-regulate and cope even in the context of multiple negative life experiences is foundational to managing relationships with family members, educational personnel, employers, and others. These skills are as critical as the other skills young people need to transition successfully to a permanent placement or adulthood. For example, many youth in the foster care system are able to interview and be selected for employment or enter college; however, the ability to persist in these

endeavors is often more difficult for youth in foster care than that in the general population.

### *Status of Older Children and Youth in the Foster Care System*

Over the last 10 years, the number of children and youth in foster care has decreased dramatically. Data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) illustrate this decrease: in 2002 there were approximately 523,000 children in foster care, but seven years later, in 2009, this number had decreased to approximately 424,000. The number of children adopted from foster care also continues to increase (from approximately 51,000 in 2002 to 57,000 in 2009). However, of concern is the fact that the number of youth who exit foster care to emancipation has also continued to increase (from 19,367 in 2002 to 29,471 in 2009).

Youth between the ages of 10 and 17 years are a uniquely vulnerable population in the child welfare system. On average, this age group comprises almost half (48 percent) of the youth who are in foster care in any given year. They also comprise approximately 40 percent of the youth who enter care in any given year, although there are noted differences in trends when the age range is divided into two subgroups. The percent of youth entering care who are ages 10-15 year has declined from 34 percent in 2002, to 27 percent in 2009, but the percent of 16 and 17 year olds has increased from 11 percent to 12 percent in that same timeframe (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, *The AFCARS Report: FY 2002 and Preliminary FY2009 Estimates*).

Many of these older children and youth have complex needs and are often involved with multiple systems. Nationally, child welfare agencies are citing neglect, the child's behavior, and the inability of the caretaker to cope as some of the main reasons why these youth are entering foster care.

### *Importance of Enduring Relationships with Biological Parents and Family While in Foster Care and During the Transition to Adulthood*

For most youth, the parent-child relationship is a stable and safe relationship where youth can experiment and develop without fear of rejection or the loss of the family. For youth in foster care, experimenting and normal adolescent behavior can result in the foster family rejecting the youth, involvement with juvenile justice, and/or residential treatment. In some cases, the lack of a stable family relationship can lead youth to runaway or to choose to live on the streets, putting them in extreme danger of exploitation. Many young people who have run away from the foster care system or alternative placements have been found trying to reconnect with biological parents, siblings, and other family members (Chapman, Wall & Barth, 2004; Courtney et al., 2005).

One factor leading to youth satisfaction while in the foster care system is tied to contact with biological family and that many children retain ongoing hope for reunification with their family (Chapman et al., 2004). In one study, 58 percent of children thought they would like to be with their biological parents again, and 74 percent believed that "things will be different this time" (Chapman et al., 2004, p. 297). Unsurprisingly, in one study, 77 percent of the children reported wanting more contact with their family and siblings (Chapman et al., 2004). Children and youth who did not want to visit with their family were in the minority with only 12 percent avoiding family visits. (Chapman et al., 2004).

Even after leaving foster care, the relationship of former foster youth with their biological family continues to be important. The *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (the Midwest Study)* followed youth who aged out of the foster care system in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and reported the functioning and experiences of the young adults at ages 23 and 24. *The Midwest Study* found that at this age 79 percent of youth reported being very close to at least one biological family member and that 15 percent of youth reported that they were somewhat close to one biological family member (Courtney, Dworsky, Lee & Raap, 2009). Furthermore, 81 percent of the young adults in the study reported contact with a biological family member at least once a week. Sixty percent reported contact with their biological mother at least once a month and 32 percent reported contact with their biological father at least once a month (Courtney et al., 2009).

While in foster care, many youth reject adoption as an appropriate permanency goal. As reported in one study, "when young adults discussed feelings of attachment they continue to have towards their biological families and parents, adoption often represents a threat to these attachments and relationships" and youth "felt adoption meant they would have to replace their 'real moms' with 'new moms' (Samuels, 2008, p. 47)." Yet, despite these misgivings expressed by some youth, a number of youth who have aged out of the foster care system are later adopted as young adults by relatives or former foster parents.

Youths' perception and understanding of "permanency" is often significantly different from the legal definition. While adoption is a form of permanency, youth might not understand the significance and importance of adoption while they are in the foster care system. However, when youth are asked if they want a family to provide support and be a part of their life, the answer is generally "yes." Other Children's Bureau discretionary grants projects have worked with youth and the adults in their lives to create a better understanding of permanency, including the use of low-risk opportunities to meet permanent placements, including potential adoptive families, to increase self-esteem and self-efficacy. Helping youth understand, from their perspective, the complexities of relationships is critical to achieving permanency, reducing risk, and increasing protective mechanisms.

Even if youth have a goal of remaining with a supportive and protective foster or kinship family, as they get older the relationship with their biological parent continues to evolve. Youth who want to maintain these relationships may have to contend with possible hurt or anger on the part of a permanent kinship or foster family as they reconnect with their biological parents. As youth mature, develop, and start families of their own, youth who aged out of foster care may want those biological parents to be involved with them and their spouse or partner. The skills and ability to negotiate complex relationship (between foster and biological parents and the non-custodial parent) can be critical to a young parent who is in the foster care system or who has aged out and may need to rely on other adults to help raise, provide child care, and support their child(ren).

After they age out of the foster care system, many youth plan to return to their biological parent(s). There are many reasons why youth may choose to "return" to their parent after the age of 18. In some situations, this is motivated by a desire of the youth to once again live with their parents; however, in many cases it may be the only viable option for youth after emancipation. Preparing youth for this reunification with the relational skills needed is critical to reducing risk.

U.S. society continues to place emphasis on the biological relationship between individuals. Even in the simplest terms, knowing what health and medical conditions to which an individual may be predisposed because of family history is important knowledge as youth transition into self-sufficiency and adulthood. Youth who have been living in foster care might not have access to this information or records, which can impact the ability to make informed decisions about prevention and healthcare.

Some youth may not want to have contact with their biological family and some youth may choose not to involve one member of their biological family in their life but still have relationships with other members. While each youth's choices should be respected, it is likely that all youth will need relationship skills to help them live without the support of a biological family. The absence of a biological support system is a risk factor that may determine the use of a specific set of interventions to promote protective mechanisms.

Developing competencies in managing complex relationships is important in other contexts as well. These skills can facilitate successes in the workplace, where it is necessary to establish positive relationships with employers and colleagues, and in academic settings where positive relationships with peers, professors, and academic advisors are key to successes. Additionally, a support system in place can be a critical way to ameliorate risk and increase resiliency and reinforce coping.

### *Biological Parents and Risk Factors*

In the *Midwest Study*, youth were asked at baseline (age 17 and still in foster care) to identify the primary problem that their caregiver (who may or may not be a biological parent) had before their placement in foster care. Youth reported caregiver use of alcohol (35 percent), use of drugs (43 percent), inability to

parent (39 percent), mental illness (19 percent), and combinations of these issues (71 percent) as some of the reasons (Courtney, Terao & Bost, 2004). These identified risk factors, specifically drug/alcohol and mental illness, are of critical concern when determining how to best strengthen protective factors in youth. Furthermore, interventions and strategies to build protective mechanisms with youth can have a positive impact on parental functioning.

### *Death*

When the death of a parent or a caregiver has led to the foster care placement, there is a different set of emotions and supports that a youth might need to cope with the loss of the caregiver. While grief counseling might be an important service for some youth, it may not be sufficient as that loss continues to impact a youth's life on a daily basis. Early parental loss combined with multiple adverse life experiences may be of particular concern (Rutter, 1987).

### *Legal Status and Connections*

For many youth in the foster care system, the termination of parental rights is a legal procedure that may not change the connection young people have with their families. Many youth still have a relationship with their biological parents and as they get older and visit with their family, with or without the consent of the State agency. While in some cases this continues to be inappropriate when the safety of the youth is in question, in other situations the youth needs to develop skills to manage the relationship and keep themselves safe. This is especially critical when the youth has a special need or circumstance, e.g., developmental delay; pregnant or parenting; lesbian; gay; bisexual; transgendered; or questioning (LGBTQ). The skills developed based on a special need or circumstance translates into practical and useful skills in any environment.

As youth age and develop, they have greater autonomy, a key aspect of age-appropriate development. Because older children and youth generally have greater independence, they are able to visit family and relatives without the knowledge or consent of the child welfare agency. The increasing use of social networking sites allows families to remain in contact. Many States do not allow youth in foster care to visit with their biological parents without supervision even though the risk to the child may not be present. Older children who are removed from their families still have an on-going relationship and connection to their parents. Building protective mechanism to allow the youth to manage risk is critical for older children and youth who want contact with their families or relatives. While skills that help to manage risk are crucial in these situations, they are also invaluable to understanding how to keep safe in any environment.

While some States have moved to revoke or rescind the termination of parental rights when an un-adopted youth reaches a certain age, not all jurisdictions have such policies. Furthermore, while it is possible that reunification may be safe and appropriate for such older children and youth, there is no known best practice for facilitating reunification after a long-term separation. Research suggests that reunification may look different for older children and youth (Wulczyn, 2004). Considering the increase in the percentage of youth entering the foster care system at 16 or 17, in addition to the number of older children aged 10 to 14 in foster care, it is critical to determine how to best meet the needs of these youth and their families during the reunification process, as appropriate.

### *Extending Title IV-E Foster Care and Permanency Hearings*

States are responsible for establishing permanency plans for children in foster care. In many cases, the default permanency goal for older youth is "other planned permanency arrangement." For States that elect to extend foster care past age 18, reunification may be the realistic goal of the youth. However, it is not known how the reunification process of older youth differs from that of other, younger children. Additionally, for some youth continued attempts to prepare youth for another permanent family may be appropriate.

### *Siblings*



A study conducted by Jones & Kruk (2005) of youth from the Canadian foster care system found that "youth named siblings more frequently than any other family member with whom they now have contact, and identified their birth family as their primary object of attachment, despite the birth family being identified the least often as those to whom the youth turn when they are sick or who they talk to about their feelings" (p. 405).

The relationship between siblings in the foster care system is often complex. While child welfare agencies continue to work to improve at placing biological siblings together, and when unable to place them together to provide meaningful and frequent visitation, youth in foster care often have a broader understanding of a sibling. Other youth who are part of their "foster family" often form a very important support system for youth, some positive and some not.

Relationships between family members can become even more complex when a sibling, guardian, or other family member has had to play multiple roles in a youth's life. For example, a youth in foster care may depend on an older sibling as a form of parental support. Managing the relationship of both a sibling and a parental figure can be a challenge. This is especially true when there is a history of trauma and/or abuse in the family. Furthermore, biological siblings continue to provide emotional support and a relationship with biological parents, regardless of their placement.

The skills developed to help youth cope with one's family can serve youth in other ways as they transition to adulthood. These coping skills can help promote stress reduction and resiliency factors. While resilient children are not unaffected by trauma, they are better able to cope effectively with challenges and overcome adversity. While some youth who age out of foster care do not seek to continue the relationship with their biological parents, many of them do.

## Engaging Hard-to-Reach Youth in the Foster Care System

### *Youth Who Run Away*

Youth who run away from the foster care system are some of the most vulnerable youth. While on the run, youth can be exposed to a host of situations that put them at-risk. Running away from foster care may be a sign of problems, including risk in their placements, undiagnosed mental health or substance abuse issues, or continuing issues regarding the biological family or caregiver from whom the child was removed (Courtney et al., 2005). In one Chapin Hall study of youth who run from the Illinois foster care system, older youth were found to be much more likely than younger youth to be gone from the foster care system for longer than a month (Courtney et al., 2005). One of the three top reasons that youth run from foster care was related to issues with their biological family. In fact, "many of the youth [in the study] described their biological families as exerting a distinct emotional pull on them. In some cases, this was manifest in the urge to reconnect or stay connected." (Courtney et al., 2005, p. 3). The lack of a stable placement is a critical risk factor. While youth may develop skills while on the street to cope with hazards, these skills may not contribute to the building of self-esteem or self-efficacy.

It is significant that youth often run from their foster care placement to maintain contact with their biological family and that "for a number of the youth [in the study], their runs centered on their family of origin. In fact, unlike the majority of runaway youth who appear to be running away from family, foster youth often report that they are running to family. This might help explain why the presence of a sibling in the same placement appeared to encourage youth to stay put. However, this group is not marked solely by strong attachments to and relationships with their family of origin. Some recognize that their families of origin are neither healthy, safe, nor even reciprocally caring environments. But many youth equated being around a biological family with being "normal," and their desire for a "real home" (which foster care was not, in their minds). Some were drawn back to their biological family in order to help their mothers or their siblings" (Courtney et al., 2005, p. 4).

While there is not much data on where youth run to, since a fair amount of youth are running to be with their family, then it may be logical to assume that youth are remaining in their home community. While some youth may leave their county or State, this may also be driven by where relatives or family are

located. In fact, the location of youth on-the-run may be known by other youth in the system or by siblings. In some cases, caseworkers may interpret the fact that youth have run away from foster care as making a choice and therefore may not make concerted efforts to locate the youth and engage them in appropriate services, including reunification efforts, that could prevent them from running again.

Providers of runaway and homeless youth services (specifically those funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)) in the community can be strong partners in working with this population of youth. While FYSB services are designated for non-system youth (youth not in the foster care or juvenile justice system), youth on-the-run from the foster care system are usually savvy enough to know not to tell service providers about their foster care status. Furthermore, FYSB-funded basic centers have a unique experience of working with youth who have run away from a parent or caregiver and have expertise in working with youth to reunify with family members or other caregivers. For more information on FYSB services and providers, please see the websites at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/> and [www.ncfy.com/](http://www.ncfy.com/).

### *Youth in Mental Health Systems*

Youth who are involved in the mental health system may be in great need of services to help form supportive and enduring relationships with adults. Youth in mental health systems are more likely to be placed in a group home setting away from their home community. These youth are likely to benefit greatly from services targeted at maintaining relationships, including those of their biological family. As youth with mental health issues transition to permanent family relationships and to adulthood, it is critical that they learn how to use their relational competencies to advocate for themselves and to direct and manage their services independently.

There are also numerous youth in the child welfare system who have experienced trauma and have resulting internalizing or externalizing behaviors that make it difficult to navigate relationships, but these youth do not qualify for traditional mental health services. Ensuring strategies are developed to support these youth is critical.

### *Youth in Juvenile Justice*

Youth who are in both the foster care and juvenile justice system (often referred to as cross-over youth) have unique needs, both in terms of personal development, connection to a permanent family, and their transition to adulthood.

### *Rural Youth*

Youth in foster care in rural areas often have different needs and experiences than youth in more urban areas. For example, youth in rural areas may have a significant number of family members in the community where restrictions have been made regarding contact or placement. Applicants are encouraged to consider how serving rural populations may differ from that of the urban population. Rural youth may have different risk factors and mechanisms of protective factors.

### *Development of Healthy Relationships and Connections to Other Adults*

A recent National Governor's Association (NGA) report titled, "The Transition to Adulthood: How States Can Support Older Youth in Foster Care" named education, employment, housing, health care, and relationships as critical elements in supporting youths' successful transition to adulthood from foster care. The NGA report concludes that youth who are helped to build stable and secure relationships fare much better in adulthood (Golonka, 2010). While an important goal is to achieve permanency, it is only one protective mechanism. Older children and youth need support in the development of skills to form *and maintain* healthy relationships.

Most youth advocates argue that youth should leave foster care with a connection to a family and other supportive adults who will be there to support and nurture them as they transition to adulthood. For some youth, finding at least one supportive adult or family can be challenging because of the complex needs and

history of the young person. When a youth does not have a safe and stable placement, the idea is reinforced that relationships are only short-term and disposable. Learning to move on after a loss can be a skill reinforced by the foster care system that has long-term negative consequences. Yet a large number of youth in foster care learn to manage and maintain relationships and use their networks to assist in employment, financial assistance, childcare, transportation finding, and securing a place to live. Relational competencies allow these youth to grow and thrive in the transition to adulthood.

However, other children and youth who are in the foster care system are unable to form any relationships in a meaningful way. The very skills that have helped and protected them in their home, on the street, or in their foster care environment may not be useful when they are in a safe and stable environment. Youth need to have models and other positive examples that are applicable and relevant to their life. Youth can also benefit from skill development that builds the social and emotional capacity of youth to recognize and engage in healthy relationships. Conversely, youth must also have the capacity to recognize risky or detrimental relationships and manage those relationships appropriately.

Several studies have discussed how the relationship of the youth with their caseworkers can approximate that of the parental supportive relationship. Therefore, youth need support, in a positive way, as feelings of loss or abandonment that may be experienced when a caseworker is no longer in the youth's life may be critical in the development of the social and emotional capacity of the youth.

Biological parents are only one set of relationships that need to be developed for most youth who age out of foster care. Having a diverse group of adults on whom a young person can depend during the transition to a permanent family and to adulthood is critical. Learning how to appropriately manage and engage in close relationships with peers and other adults is part of the process of achieving permanency and in the transition to adulthood.

### The Foster Care Experience

It is not surprising that often young adults and youth point to others who have been through the foster care system as some of the only people who can relate to them (Samuels, 2008). In one study of youth who were in foster care, caseworkers and other professionals formed a substantial proportion of the adults named by youth as people who can offer supports as youth transition to adulthood; but youth felt that these adults have a limited understanding (personal experience) of what it is like to be in foster care, which hinders the types of supports they could provide (Samuels, 2008). Some of the ability to relate best to other youth who have been or who are in the foster care system might also be tied to the frequent stigmatization of children and youth in foster care.

A significant amount of work and training has been done by various organizations to educate the public about the foster care system. Often the assumption is that youth and children in foster care have done something that warrants their placement in foster care. Often during youth presentations to community groups one of the questions to the youth is that of "but what did you do." One researcher suggests "the development of independence is also negatively affected by stigmatized self-identity, which results in low self-confidence and a lack of future-orientation. The conception of a future occupation or career is an extension of self-identity. As a major component of identity development, adolescents are considering what they want to become. With a stigmatized self-identity, the focus is on "What I cannot do," not "What I can do" (Kools, 1997). As older youth become young adults, many of them hide their history of foster care even in cases where they are very successful and have transitioned into adulthood (Kools, 1999).

Furthermore, because of the lack of stability, or the perceived instability in the life of a foster child (due to reunification, placement and/or school moves, group home shutdown, transition of caseworkers), youth in foster care may find it hard to plan for the future because of the "here and now" focus of foster care or a focus on a particular event, such as turning 18 (Kools, 1995, 1997). This drive towards the goal of leaving foster care may reflect how youth see their inability to make decisions about their life (e.g., placement, school, recreational activities) while they were in the foster care system and, therefore, see the decision to leave foster care as the first true decision that they have been able to make. Like other youth, once they

realize how important it is to have support and services in place during the transition to adulthood and potentially into a permanent family relationship, many youth will accept help. It is then that peer support (other young adults from the foster care system) may be an important service to help them in this transition.

### Peer Support

During adolescence, youths' primary support system tends to shift from that of the parental relationship to that of peers. The peer support relationship between youth who have been in foster care continues to be one that is often indicated as a strong. This may be because youth have had relationship challenges with family, making peer support and relationships even more important in the absence of the family support. Some of the most promising practices with young adults in the child welfare field involve youth developing and leading training for other youth in foster care, such as training programs conducted by Foster Club ( <http://www.fosterclub.com/>) and programs developed by States to be used at teen conference and trainings.

While it is known that siblings in foster care may have strong bonds, the relationship of the bonds between peers in the foster care or "foster siblings" has yet to be fully researched as a source of peer support in helping to develop relationship and supports. Further research in the area is needed to learn how peer foster care supports can affect outcomes for youth. Please see the National Resource Center Youth Development at: <http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/> for more information on youth development and foster care.

Applicants are also encouraged to look at recent studies about adolescent brain development as a basis for understanding how to best develop skills in self-regulation, coping, and self-efficacy. Other studies have examined how relationships, including peer relationships, influence risk-taking behavior among adolescent youth. Applicants should consider how to develop skills to help youth build and maintain relationships within this context with a specific focus on how peer relationships in the foster care system can be utilized.

Generally, youth who have aged out of the foster care system and who subsequently represent the system as advocates are those who are likely to have developed skills to manage and build relationships with supportive adults. This grant should target youth who are less visible and are the most in need of the type of services that the grant is targeting.

### *Positive Youth Development*

Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that:

- Engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive;
- Recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and
- Promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing multiple opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build their skills, sense of mastery, and leadership strengths.

Positive youth development programs provide opportunities for meaningful involvement and promote a number of positive attributes and outcomes in youth, including:

- Social skills, emotional competence, positive relationships with peers and adults, and civic and school engagement.
- Youth participation and involvement in program design, implementation, and evaluation. Although adults may set the structure, youth are involved as active agents in the program and are not just the recipients of services. Adults engage youth in creating a respectful and inclusive program environment.
- Positive environments and safe and structured places. Programs provide appropriate youth-to-adult ratios for supervision, a system for ensuring youth are welcomed when they arrive, and a balance for different learning styles in programmatic activities. Programs respect diversity and different cultures.

- Skill and asset development opportunities. Programs develop, acknowledge, and employ youth assets. Programs engage youth in exploring career and workforce opportunities and provide occasions for goal setting. Programs provide opportunities to master and apply skills, and engage youth in determining choices that help them progress toward new levels of learning.
- Opportunities to serve others. Youth have opportunities for civic involvement and civic engagement. Youth contribute to their communities through service. Programs create opportunities to make a difference through service learning or peer support.
- Positive relationships with adults. Adults and youth work in partnership through the program. Adequately trained, caring staff members who understand and respect the developmental needs and contributions of young people are essential.

Youth who have experienced trauma are likely to need additional support that builds protective mechanisms to weather risk. Positive youth development provides a foundation for this work but more is likely needed to support youth who struggle to successfully engage in relationships. Development of a framework for positive youth development for youth who have experienced multiple adverse life experiences has not been adequately researched.

## Resources

### Further Information on AFCARS

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/index.htm#afcars>

### Chapin Hall Center for Children- Research on Foster Care

<http://www.chapinhall.org/research/areas/Child-Welfare-and-Foster-Care-Systems>

### Further Information on the Midwest Study

Distinct Subgroups of Former Foster Youth During Young Adulthood: Implications for Policy and Practice. Located at:

[http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/Midwest\\_IB4\\_Latent\\_Class\\_2.pdf](http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/Midwest_IB4_Latent_Class_2.pdf)

### Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program Evaluation

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse\\_neglect/chafee/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/chafee/index.html)

### Children's Bureau Grantees:

Training of Child Welfare Agency Supervisor in the Effective Delivery and Management of Federal Independent Living Services for Youth in Foster Care

- [www.youthtrainingproject.org](http://www.youthtrainingproject.org) (California)
- [www.uiowa.edu/~nrcfcp/training/youthtransition.shtml](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nrcfcp/training/youthtransition.shtml) (Iowa)
- [www.kentcareteam.org/tier3/independentliving.htm](http://www.kentcareteam.org/tier3/independentliving.htm) (Kentucky)
- [www.steps-umms.org/index.aspx](http://www.steps-umms.org/index.aspx) (Massachusetts)
- [www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass) (New York)
- [www.palstep.com](http://www.palstep.com) (Texas)

Research on Possible Selves, Oyserman, D. & Markus, J.R. (1990). Possible Selves and Delinquency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(1), 112-125.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Resources: What a Difference a Friend Makes

[http://www.whatadifference.samhsa.gov/site.asp?nav=nav00&content=4\\_0\\_about](http://www.whatadifference.samhsa.gov/site.asp?nav=nav00&content=4_0_about)

Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents: A Research Based Guide for Parenting, Educators, and Community Leaders. 2nd Edition.

<http://drugabuse.gov/pdf/prevention/redbook.pdf>

Further Information on Risk and Protective Factors

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/factors/>

<http://www.nida.nih.gov/prevention/risk.html>

O'Connell, M.E., Boat, T. & Warner, K.E. (Eds.) (2009). *Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

Werner, E.E. (1995). Resilience In Development. *Current Directions In Psychological Science*, 4(No.3., June 1995), 81-85. Information on Youth Services [www.findyouthinfo.gov](http://www.findyouthinfo.gov)

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Courtney, M.E., Skyles, A., Miranda, G., Zinn, A., Howard, E. & Goerge, R.M. (2005). *Youth Who Run Away from Out-of-Home Care: Issue Brief 103*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

Courtney, M.E., Terao, S. & Bost, N. (2004). *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

Golonka, S. (2010). The Transition to Adulthood: How States Can Support Older Youth in Foster Care. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. Retrieved from: <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/1012FOSTERCARE.PDF>.

Harrison, C. (1999). Young People, Being In Care and Identity. In Masson, J., Harrison, C. & Pavlovic, A. (Eds.), *Lost and Found: Making and Remaking Working Partnerships with Parents of Children in the Care System* (65-90). London: British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering.

Jones, L & Kurk, E. (2005). Life in Government Care: The Connection of Youth to Family. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 34(60), 405-421.

Kools, S.M. (1997). Adolescent Identity Development in Foster Care. *Family Relations*, 46, 263-271.

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Kufeldt, K., Armstrong, J. & Dorosh, M. (1995). How Children View Their Own and Their Foster Families: A Research Study. *Child Welfare*, 74(3), 695- 715.

Lerner, R. & Castellino, D. (2002). Contemporary Development Theory and Adolescence: Developmental Systems and Applied Developmental Science. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 31, (Suppl6), 122-135.

Rutter, M. (1987). Psychosocial Resilience and Protective Mechanisms. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57(3), 316-331.

Samuels, G.M. (2008). *A Reason, A Season, or a Lifetime: Relational Permanence Among Young Adults with Foster Care Backgrounds*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

Samuels, G.M. & Pryce, J.M. (2007). "What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger": Survivalist Self-Reliance as Resilience and Risk Among Young Adults Aging Out of Foster Care. *Child and Youth*



Wulczyn, F. (2004). *Family Reunification*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

#### Working with Other CB Discretionary Grant Projects

The Children's Bureau (CB) currently funds approximately 300 discretionary grant projects in over 50 different program areas. Through their work with a broad spectrum of populations within the child welfare arena, discretionary grantees develop a wealth of knowledge across numerous program areas. The findings from these programs can be useful in informing the field. Specifically, CB has addressed the important issues related to youth and independent living. Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize the knowledge being developed by CB discretionary research and demonstration projects and other related Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) activities when developing proposals in response to this funding announcement. For more information on CB discretionary grant programs, please see

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs\\_fund/index.htm#disc](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/index.htm#disc) and [http://basis.caliber.com/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb\\_grants/GrantHome](http://basis.caliber.com/cbgrants/ws/library/docs/cb_grants/GrantHome).

#### **Project Requirements for Awards under Funding Opportunity Announcement - Improving Service Delivery to Youth in the Child Welfare System**

The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to support the effective implementation of strategies to help youth at risk of aging out or who are 18-21 and still involved with the foster care system to develop skills to strengthen and manage relationships with biological family members and other important individuals in their lives. These strategies will facilitate reunification, when safe and appropriate, or other legal permanency for older youth in foster care (including those who enter care at age 16 or older), and promote a healthy transition into adulthood.

While achieving permanency is an important part of the desired results of this FOA, a concurrent goal is to support the development of healthy relationships skills among adolescents in the foster care system. A core output of the work is the development and implementation of a framework or practice model to promote protective mechanisms in youth that allow for increased capacity to build and maintain lasting healthy relationships and to recognize and manage relationships appropriately that are not healthy.

A generic set of services are not required for the grant. This grant is an investment in helping youth function in relationships and build capacity to navigate successfully in the world using the tools of self-regulation, coping, and self-efficacy. The programming of the grant would provide opportunities to build this skill set in multiple areas of the older child's or youth's life, including familial, social, educational, and workplace relationships.

Grant funds will be used for these activities:

- The planning necessary to develop effective strategies;
- The range of activities and services needed to develop, adopt, implement, assess, and sustain effective programs;
- Services which address barriers to youth creating and maintaining healthy, meaningful relationship in and outside of the foster care system;
- Active participation in rigorous site-specific and cross-site evaluations that include process/implementation, outcome, and cost study components; and
- Effective dissemination of information about grantee experiences to key target audiences.

These projects will identify opportunities and create social supports in preparation for the transition to a permanent family and to adulthood. As defined in this FOA, social supports can be viewed as a range of services to help youth create skills to manage relationships and develop the ability to self-regulate, cope with adversity, and increase self-efficacy.

Applicants for funding under this FOA have flexibility to identify the specific target population, between the ages of 10 and 21, and design the intervention and services for the young people. The projects funded under this FOA will be expected to:

1. Implement innovative social and emotional support intervention strategies, informed by the relevant literature, to improve outcomes for youth who have aged out but are still involved with the foster care system or who are likely to age out of foster care in terms of social and emotional supports; and
2. Rigorously evaluate these efforts to provide substantial information about the effectiveness of the programs, interventions, and practices implemented in improving outcomes for young adults.

If grant funds are used to provide direct services, they must not supplant Federal, State, or local funding or replace services provided under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

Applicants should describe how their proposed interventions for youth can be considered a package of intervention services based on an assessment of risk and protective factors, needs identified by individual youth, and needs identified by a larger group of stakeholders, including youth. Use of strong assessment tools such as the Ansell-Casey Life Skill Assessment ( <http://www.caseylifeskills.org/>) or Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is recommended to ensure the individual services are based on the needs of the youth. Applicants should address the fact that while assessments are often conducted with older youth in foster care, services actually provided to youth preparing for independent living may not be appropriately targeted or tailored to individual needs.

It also expected that teams of four to six project staff and key partners will participate in the annual grantee meeting, of which at least two will be youth members (alumni of the foster care system or youth currently in foster care). Youth members are expected to serve in leadership positions on the project team. The agency must ensure that they have the ability to fund the travel for the youth involved in the grant in an age-appropriate manner that is sensitive to the youths' economic status.

These projects will be expected to build knowledge about interventions, models, programs, and/or practices that are effective in addressing the social and emotional needs of youth at risk of aging out of foster care or youth who have aged out but are still involved with the foster care system.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to base their proposals on key research identified in the Background section of this FOA. Applicants are encouraged to develop partnerships with academic institutions and professional organizations that are focused on developing relationship competencies with youth. This may include working with organizations focused on adoption and/or divorce as they may have expertise in supporting the development of strong relationships and attachments in the context of loss or trauma.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize the knowledge being developed by the Children's Bureau (CB) discretionary research and demonstration projects, Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) findings, and other related child welfare reform activities when developing proposals in response to this FOA.

Applicants should describe how, within their target population, certain youth services may need to be tailored to the unique needs of the youth, including:

- Pregnant or parenting teens in foster care, including males who have non-resident children;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning youth;
- Youth whose biological parents live with severe and/or persistent substance and/or mental health issues;
- Youth with a history of running away from foster care;
- Other sub-populations within the target group who are less likely to utilize CFCIP services or utilize or enroll in extended foster care; and
- Youth with substance abuse and/or mental health issues, or involvement with the juvenile justice system.

## **Proposal Requirements**



Proposals should include the following information:

1. Analysis of the data for the population to be served including:
  - Distribution of ages;
  - Age of entry into care;
  - Permanency goal;
  - Average number of placements;
  - Placement types of the target youth;
  - Length of stay;
  - Average number of school changes;
  - Percent that emancipates from the system without achieving permanency;
  - Size and characteristics of the applicant's target population relative to the larger child welfare population; and
  - Other information relevant to the population.
2. Current activities present in the target community and at the State level to engage older youth and young adults, including youth advisory boards, sibling camps, and youth leadership activities that can be used to ensure the project effectively engages youth;
3. Current system of independent living services in the State, including description of services to biological families and youth in foster care as the youth transitions to adulthood;
4. Identify how youth have been engaged in developing this grant application and in the work designed to facilitate the submission of the application, including how and what supports would be provided to support continued youth participation in the project if this proposal is funded;
5. Current laws, policies, and procedures relative to visiting with biological family, siblings, and former foster parents, for older youth, including those whose rights have been terminated;
6. Current policies and procedures relating to prevention of removal and reunification services for older youth;
7. Justification that the proposed approach or services will address the identified areas of need based on existing research/evidence;
8. Identification of promising models, programs, services and/or practices proposed for implementation that will be reviewed and approved by CB, if appropriate, at the end of the planning phase of the project;
9. Description of the how services, program activities, and materials will be developed and provided in a manner that is racially and culturally sensitive to the population being served;
10. Applicants in large jurisdictions proposing a staged approach to project implementation should describe the process for introducing and evaluating the new approach at each successive stage of implementation;
11. Arrangements for technical assistance to sites and front line staff implementing new practices including, when applicable, collaboration with the original designer/developer of the model(s) selected to support the replication effort, to ensure fidelity to the model(s) and provide for quality service provision;
12. Description of the process, including timeframes, that will be used during the Assessment/Planning Phase to further develop and fine-tune the plan, and during the Implementation Phase to implement the proposed project, including the activities to be conducted in chronological order, showing a reasonable schedule of accomplishments and target dates, and the factors that may accelerate or decelerate the work;
13. Evidence that the proposed project is commensurate with the level of funding provided in this announcement;
14. Description of the administrative structure for the project, including the lead agency responsible for implementing the plan, providing management and oversight for the proposed initiative, and coordinating

with the other partner agencies, the relevant partners, including the courts, and the proposed roles and level of commitment of the agencies, and service providers that have entered into partnership with the applicant, as evidenced by a letter of intent or memorandum of understanding. If the primary applicant is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, the applicant must document a strong partnership(s) and willingness to be actively involved with the project on the part of the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s);

15. Description of key personnel, their roles and how they will ensure their continued support throughout the project;

16. Description of how youth and other consumers of services will be involved in the planning and on-going implementation of the project;

17. Description of a framework for how positive youth development principals and strategies will take into account the needs of youth who have experienced multiple adverse life experiences and how the framework will be implemented throughout the project;

18. The strategy for effective dissemination of information about the project's innovative interventions strategies and their effectiveness;

19. Description of productive linkages with appropriate agencies, organizations, and resources on the local, regional, State, Tribal or Federal levels, including those funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB);

20. The status of the State's implementation of the National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD) and how the data collections might be used as part of the evaluation of the project's impact on relevant outcomes of the youth in the grantee's target population;

21. A preliminary list of targeted outcomes for youth relevant to the target population;

22. A logic model or other document to detail how inputs will lead to outcomes; and

23. Description of how the programs or practices implemented to improve the outcomes of youth at risk of aging out of foster care or youth who aged out but are still involved with the foster care system will be sustained after Federal assistance has ended.

#### *Other Aspects to Consider in the Application*

- How to include the relationship between youth and their fathers in a meaningful way.
- Use of social media to connect youth with family and other relatives in a meaningful and safe way.
- How to allow youth to access their records from the child welfare system as a method to identify important connections.
- Promising practices around well-being, resiliency factors, and protective mechanisms of youth whose biological parents have ongoing substance abuse or mental health issues.
- How the loss of the relationship of a caseworker or independent living specialist impacts youth.
- What services and other supports are available to determine a full medical history of the youth and to provide this information in a meaningful way.
- Learn the complex relationship between having a relationship with someone that you can "visit" versus one where the adult can "parent" or provide meaningful support (Jones & Kruk, 2005).
- How to partner with street outreach services funded by FYSB in order to best engage youth who have run away from foster care to determine which services would best suit the unique needs of these youth.
- How youth will be involved in key leadership activities, including full-time and part-time employment opportunities for youth in foster care, or formerly in foster care and that project participants will have significant interaction with youth councils, youth advisory boards, coalitions, and youth partnerships.

- The extent to which the program demonstrates an understanding of positive youth development in the context of youth who have experienced multiple adverse life experiences and an approach to incorporating positive youth development elements and other protective mechanisms.
- Describe efforts made to involve youth in the planning of the grant application, such as meetings and conferences with youth advisory boards, youth advocacy groups, and other youth in the foster care or youth who have aged out of foster care.
- Describe how youth in the foster care system, or youth who have aged out, will be involved in the proposed project, with a special emphasis on those who do not traditionally utilize the services of the system.
- Emphasis of youth participation and leadership development in the planning, organization, and implementation of strategies and activities appropriate to achieving the project's goal and increasing opportunities for these young people.

## **Planning and Implementation Phases**

Cooperative agreements will be awarded for an initial Assessment/Planning Phase in year 1 and, pending successful completion of that phase and approval from CB of the proposed program plan, cooperative agreements for the implementation phase will be awarded for years 2 through 5. During the Assessment/Planning Phase, the projects will engage in a collaborative process to fine tune their proposal and produce a detailed plan for the development, implementation, and continued assessment of programs and practices to improve outcomes for youth aging out of foster care or who are likely to age out of foster care. Further activities during the Assessment/Planning Phase will include finalizing a set of process and outcome measures for the project's evaluation, identifying reliable data sources for collection of baseline and follow-up comparison data, and finalizing a data collection plan. To the extent possible, projects should plan to utilize data that already is collected or provided through the CFSRs, AFCARS, NYTD, or other similar efforts.

During the Implementation Phase, the projects will begin to implement their plan. The efforts of the 5-year project are expected to culminate in lasting practice improvements with effective quality assurance feedback loops which will continue to produce improved outcomes after Federal assistance has ended.

### **Phase I: Assessment/Planning Phase (Year 1)**

CB discretionary grant projects frequently benefit when given the opportunity to engage in a planning phase prior to implementing a program. By investing the resources and time in effective assessment and planning processes, child welfare agencies enhance the progress of program implementation. Therefore, projects under this FOA will be required to engage in a 6-month Assessment/Planning Phase during the first year. The Federal award amount for the first year, as a result, will be less than the award amount for the ensuing implementation years.

During the Assessment/Planning Phase, projects will be expected to initiate a collaborative planning process to further develop and refine the proposed project as described in their application.

Building on the activities started during the application process to use youth to help develop the scope and method of the intervention and services, the 6-month planning phase is to continue the discussion of the best types of services needed to achieve the appropriate outcomes. The planning phase should be used to solidify the roles of the young adults early on in the project.

While preparing their applications and during Phase I, applicants must collaborate with other relevant State, Tribal, and community agencies to plan the investment of Federal, State, local, and private funding streams, where appropriate, in the proposed project. Applicants will be expected to build on youth engagement work which begun as part of the original application process.

If the primary applicant is a non-profit or institution of higher education, the applicant must involve the public child welfare agency with responsibility for administering the child welfare program in the targeted geographical area in the Assessment/Planning Phase. The overall purpose is to ensure that all relevant

partners and funding streams are identified and included in these coordination efforts. The culmination of this process will be the development and presentation of a detailed plan to be implemented during years 2 through 5 of the project.

The final plan submitted after the 6-month planning period should amplify and refine the plan the applicant describes in its application for Federal funding. The final plan should include, at a minimum, but is not limited to, the following elements:

### **Refining the Target Population**

In order to assist the project in fine-tuning the focus of intervention and services efforts, to more clearly define the population which will be the focus of the planned activities, and to further demonstrate need for the program, model or practice changes proposed, additional analysis should be conducted of data related to the target service population within the project's identified jurisdiction. If the primary applicant is a non-profit or institution of higher education, the applicant must collaborate with the relevant public child welfare agency in the identification of the target population, and must provide evidence of such collaboration (e.g., an item in the relevant letter of agreement/MOU identifying the mutually agreed-upon target population(s)).

### **Conducting a Detailed Assessment of Needs and Strengths**

The purpose of the assessment is to assist the project in fine-tuning the focus of the intervention and service strategies to improve the outcomes for youth who aged out of foster care or who are likely to age out of foster care and to demonstrate need for the interventions and services proposed. Applicants are encouraged to refer to existing supporting documentation regarding barriers specific to their agency, such as the CFSR Statewide Assessment, CFSR Final Report, Court Improvement Program assessment results, or other community needs and/or organizational assessments. If the primary applicant is a non-profit or institution of higher education, the applicant must involve the relevant public child welfare agency in the assessment. The assessment should focus on barriers to permanency, including artificial or perceived barriers to providing the intervention or services for youth aging out of foster care or who have aged out of foster care, across areas such as:

- Community and environmental factors;
- Service delivery and access;
- Resources (agency and system financial structures);
- Collaboration and joint accountability; and
- Policies and procedures.

### **Building an Accountable Collaborative Governance Structure**

The applicant should provide a detailed description of the structure of the governing body of the project, including how the lead agency will provide comprehensive management and oversight for this initiative. The description should identify roles and responsibilities of participants, including how key personnel will be involved in the implementation phase to ensure continued support of the project, including identification of the roles of the management team, implementation team, and local level teams, if appropriate. If the primary applicant is a non-profit or institution of higher education, there should be documentation from the relevant child welfare agency which demonstrates a full understanding of what is expected during its participation in the proposed project and a willingness to maintain commitment to the project throughout the implementation phase. The description will identify formal links between the governing body, key partnering agencies, courts, and consumers. Additionally, decision-making processes, joint accountability, and oversight should be addressed, including communication protocols and feedback loops at the practice, supervisory, organizational, and systems levels.

Implementation Phase teams should be considered with the following makeup and responsibilities:

- State-based or management level teams with program design responsibilities containing key decision makers, youth and family consumers, liaisons from other relevant programs, and

- representatives of frontline staff;
- Implementation teams with responsibility to prepare frontline staff, community, and consumers for program changes and to ensure implementation through follow-up with those stakeholders and with researchers on effective program implementation; and
- Local level teams, if deemed appropriate by the size of the project site, including representatives of the management level and implementation teams, to promote communication, identify barriers, and provide feedback.

### **Identifying and Planning Future Activities**

This detailed plan should include:

- Timeline for implementing the plan. Applicants may choose to use a phased-in approach that starts with one local jurisdiction serving as an initial implementation site and then expands to other areas within the project's jurisdiction once the initial efforts have proven successful. Other proposed alternatives will be considered if demonstrated to be appropriate for the jurisdiction and target population.
- Description of the programs, models, services, and/or practices which will be implemented. The plan should clearly identify and confirm the innovative intervention strategies that will be implemented during the Implementation Phase.
- Provision of comprehensive training and technical assistance and support to implementation sites and frontline staff in meeting project goals. At a minimum, the applicant should address the capacity to provide the initial technical assistance and support to teams that will be assisting the local sites in implementing the programs, model(s), or practices. This may include such strategies as coaching, mentoring, or supervision improvements to facilitate implementation.
- Capacity for ongoing training and professional development. The plan should identify what staff will need development and how it will be provided.
- Plans for working with local sites in order to accomplish project goals.

### **Refining the Project Logic Model to Guide the Interventions and Evaluation**

The logic model should link the activities proposed for the implementation phase to the identified outcomes. It should present a clear illustration of how the applicant's plans will result in the desired outcomes for the target population. The logic model will also serve as the foundation upon which the evaluation is developed, implemented, and monitored.

It should be noted that services provided under the CFCIP often lack a concrete logic model that links activities to outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to describe how the services provided by CFCIP at the Statewide or local level are believed to impact outcomes in the proposed project.

### **Review and Approval by CB**

Six months after the initial award, the project will be required to submit its draft implementation plan for review and approval by CB. A revised plan that incorporates the recommendations of CB may be required. Continuation funding for years 2 through 5 will be contingent upon CB's final approval of the plan.

### **Phase 2: Implementation Phase (From Plan Approval through Year Five)**

Following plan approval, the project implements the plan proposed in its application and strengthened and fine-tuned in the Assessment/Planning Phase. Using the comprehensive and collaborative implementation plan and timelines approved by CB, the project develops the infrastructure and implements its project models and/or programs. The plan resulting from the Assessment/Planning Phase provides a roadmap for the partners to follow as they implement their project.

As the projects implement the various components of their plans, they will work closely with CB to adhere to the plan, share lessons learned along the way, and disseminate best practices.

## Collaboration and Joint Accountability

The projects are expected to implement interagency collaborative efforts with a commitment to joint accountability across various disciplines with common target populations and shared outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with the following entities in the development of the project application, project plan, and the subsequent implementation of projects when relevant to the target population:

- Public child welfare agencies;
- Private child and family services agencies;
- Designated lead agency for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (see [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org) for a list of contacts);
- The Courts(s) with jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population;
- The State Court Improvement Project  
[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs\\_fund/state\\_tribal/ct\\_imprv.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/state_tribal/ct_imprv.htm);
- Tribal child welfare programs and Tribes with IV-E agreements;
- State, Tribal and/or local education systems; and
- State, Tribal and/or local mental health, juvenile justice, and substance abuse systems; and community-based organizations.

## Evaluation

CB will expect grantees to conduct an evaluation of sufficient rigor to demonstrate potential linkages between project activities and improved outcomes. Guided by a logic model for the project, this evaluation will include both process and outcome evaluation components. The process evaluation will assess the implementation of the project, as well as the linkages between the collaborative partners that will help ensure that identified needs of children and families are met. The outcomes component will use a sufficiently rigorous approach to examine how the approaches used in this demonstration project affect key outcomes of interest. The evidence from the evaluation will support evidence-based practice and provide examples of strategies that are tied to positive outcomes for children and families.

CB expects the evaluation of this initiative to be informative and rigorous. CB expects grantees to engage in a strong site-specific evaluation in order to improve its processes and services, and to demonstrate linkages between project activities and improved outcomes. Additionally, grantees will participate fully in any applicable national evaluation effort that relates to this program announcement.

Grantees will evaluate their project's effectiveness in improving outcomes for youth aging out of foster care. CB is also interested in determining the impact of supporting the social and emotional needs of youth aging out of foster care and in improving children's outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being.

Applicants should propose a rigorous evaluation plan. Experimental designs involving random assignment to treatment and control groups are the preferred method for determining the intervention impacts. An applicant may propose another type of evaluation research design, but must include an adequate description and justification that the proposed design is the most rigorous design possible for addressing the questions of interest.

CB is interested in building knowledge about programs that most effectively and efficiently support the transition to adulthood to improve outcomes. In particular, CB is interested in determining the impact of these programs on improving children's outcomes in key areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. Toward that end, grantees should address in their evaluation plan the level of coordination between the proposed project and other programs with similar systems/services, or that serve the same clients.

During the Planning Phase, CB expects the cluster of grantees to identify a common set of data elements and questions to be answered. This will maximize the knowledge learned from this demonstration project as a whole.

In addition, the evaluation plan should address those areas in the following list that are most applicable to the proposed project:

- Permanency and stability as defined by CFSR Permanency Outcome 1, Item 10;
- Preserving connections and continuity of family relationships and connections as defined by CFSR Permanency Outcome 2, Item 14;
- The relationship of the child in care with parents as defined by CFSR Permanency Outcome 2, Item 16; and
- Adequate services to meet the physical and mental health needs as defined by CFSR Well-being Outcome 3, Item 23.

The applicant may identify additional CFSR outcomes that may yield substantive and useful information specific to its program area.

For access to the CFSR On-Site Review Instrument and definitions of terms therein, applicants are directed to [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools\\_guide/onsitefinal.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools_guide/onsitefinal.htm).

While evaluation plans must include these common components, they will also be site-specific and reflect the diversity of the grantees' approaches. Grantees may also choose to develop additional common evaluation components (i.e., methods, collection tools, processes, outputs, and/or outcomes). Grantees will also be expected to make project findings available in forms that can readily be used by the CB T/TA Network in its work with State and Tribal child welfare systems.

Grantees will regularly update their Federal project officer about ongoing evaluation activities and findings in required progress reporting and provide CB with a written report at the end of the project. Grantees in collaboration with each other, their State and Tribal partners, CB, and any applicable national evaluation contractor(s), may produce a comprehensive evaluation report at the conclusion of the project period and present findings to CB and other stakeholders.

If the applicant does not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation of the project, the applicant should contract with a third-party evaluator specializing in social science or evaluation, or a university or college, to conduct the evaluation. In either case, it is important that the evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is rigorous and appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Additional assistance may be found in a document titled "Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation." A copy of this document can be accessed at: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other\\_resrch/pm\\_guide\\_eval/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/index.html)

Applications should include a logic model that presents the conceptual framework for the proposed project and explains the linkages among the program elements. This logic model should summarize the logical connections among the needs that are the focus of the project, project goals and objectives, the target population, project inputs (resources), the proposed activities/processes/outputs directed toward the target population, the expected short- and long-term outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve, and the evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which proposed processes and outcomes actually occur. Information on the development of logic models is available on the Internet at: [http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/effectiveness/logic\\_model.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/effectiveness/logic_model.cfm)

General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>. Applicants may also contact OHRP by email ([ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov](mailto:ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov)) or by phone (240-453-6900).

### **Cost analysis/evaluation**

Given the scarce resources available for child welfare programs and the push to establish cost efficiency measures, programs funded under this FOA are expected to conduct a cost analysis that will provide State, local, and Tribal policymakers with the information they need to make more thoughtful decisions about resource allocation in their communities. Applicants are expected to include plans for conducting a cost

analysis of the model. Factors that may be considered in this analysis may include, but are not limited to, staff caseloads, supervisor to worker ratios, cost per family or unit of service, training, consultation costs, and the value of the benefits derived to the treatment costs avoided.

## **Dissemination**

CB expects that knowledge generated by these projects will be shared with the field and integrated into policy and practice. Grantees will be expected to disseminate strategically and effectively, so their project information and knowledge is received by key target audiences and used as intended to achieve identified dissemination goals. This will include both individual project dissemination of individual project products and findings AND cluster dissemination of cross-cluster products and findings.

Grantees will be expected to work throughout their projects with Federal Project Officers (FPO) CB's TTA Network, and other grantees in the cluster to:

- Finalize individual and cluster-wide dissemination goals and plans;
- Identify and engage with target audiences for dissemination;
- Assess their needs;
- Establish dissemination goals;
- Produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the program evaluation; and
- Develop and disseminate summarized/synthesized information about the projects' assessed needs, project designs, evaluation and quality assurance findings related to process (implementation) and outcome measures, costs, other evaluation questions, and lessons learned.

Applicants are expected to propose a dissemination plan and integrate this plan into the project's work plan and management plan. For example:

- Target audience (e.g., project partners; potential referral sources and project participants; funders; system managers; other States/agencies who might adopt this model or adapt their model based on what was learned, T/TA providers and Clearinghouses who can take project and cluster information, products, and findings and transfer them to those who need it)
- What you need each key audience to do (e.g., help you implement this project, refer clients to your program, use your services, fund your project when the grant ends, make system changes to accommodate/support/institutionalize your program, adopt your model or adapt their model based on what you learned, help you transfer your knowledge to others)
- What do they need to know (e.g., how your project will benefit them and/or their constituents, project process and outcomes data, stories, cost per unit, cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, how to implement your model with fidelity)
- How you will get this information/knowledge to them (e.g., identify them, develop relationships with them, ask them what they need to know about your project in order to do what you need them to do, ask them what format will work best for them, package this knowledge, transfer the knowledge to them, ensure that they receive the knowledge)
- Address individual project dissemination of individual project products and findings AND working with the other projects to plan, develop, and implement dissemination of cross-cluster products and findings
- Timeline for dissemination - what will be done, when, and by whom
- How you will know that the target audience has received your knowledge and used it as you intended
- How you will assess the long-term impact (e.g., evaluate changes in knowledge, attitude and behavior)
- Staff time and budget for dissemination (e.g., product design, development, production, marketing, distribution, evaluation; travel to present findings at conferences)

## **Collaboration**

Expectations of Non-Profit Organization Applicants



If the primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, the applicant must document a strong partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) and courts having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population. This documentation should include the following:

- Letter(s) of commitment or MOU(s) from the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s), which describe, in detail, the roles and responsibilities of the project partners;
- Evidence that the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) fully understand and are fully committed to the proposed project, and demonstrate a willingness to be fully engaged in the activities that are described in the application;
- Evidence that the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) will follow through on these commitments, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors; and
- Any other evidence that would demonstrate the full commitment of the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) to making the proposed project a success.

Collaborative efforts are strongly encouraged, but applicants must identify a primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement. If the primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, the applicant must document a strong partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) and court(s) having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population.

### **Demonstration Projects**

Activities funded under this FOA are demonstration projects. At CB, a demonstration project is one that puts into place and tests new, unique, or distinctive approaches for delivering services to a specific population.

Demonstration projects may test whether a program or service that has proven successful in one location or setting can work in a different context. Demonstration projects may test a theory, idea, or method that reflects a new and different way of thinking about service delivery. Demonstration projects may be designed to address the needs of a very specific group of clients or focus on one service component available to all clients. The scope of these projects may be broad and comprehensive or narrow and targeted to specific populations. A demonstration project must:

- Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- Determine the effectiveness, costs, and benefits of the model and its components or strategies using a rigorous evaluation approach;
- Disseminate strategically and effectively collaborate with other projects in the grant cluster to establish goals; identify and engage with target audiences; produce detailed procedures, materials, and other products based on the programs evaluations; and disseminate information about project activities, products, and findings; and
- Contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices, and programs that may be used to guide replication, program improvements, systems change, or testing in other settings.

### **Additional Project Requirements**

The applicant's signature on the application constitutes its assurance that it will comply with the following requirements:

- Have the project fully functioning within 90 days following the notification of the award.
- Participate if CB chooses to do a cross-site evaluation or a technical assistance contract that relates

to this FOA.

- Submit all performance indicator data, program, evaluation, and financial reports in a timely manner (see *Section VI.3 Reporting*), in the recommended formats (to be provided). CB prefers and will accept the interim and final reports and attachments on disk or electronically using a standard word processing program; however, projects are required to provide the original and two copies of performance progress and final reports.
- Submit an original and two copies of the final program/evaluation report and any program products to CB within 90 days of project end date.
- Acknowledges that CB reserves the right to secure and distribute grantee products and materials, including copies of journal articles written by grantees about their grant projects (45 CFR Part 74).
- Include the following notice with all grantee materials, products, publications, news releases, etc.:

*Funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Grant #\_\_\_\_\_.*

- Archive data from the program evaluation with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect within 90 days of the termination of Federal funding for the project. The applicant's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and research participants should be made aware that the data from the project will be archived and made available to other researchers after personal identifiers have been removed. Archiving will involve providing individual respondent data in electronic form and the accompanying documentation, including the codebook, the final report, and copies of the research instruments, as appropriate. A manual describing the guidelines of the Archive, *Depositing Data with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: A Handbook for Investigators*, is available from the Archive directly at the Family Life Development Center, MVR Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 (phone: (607) 255-7799), from the Archive website at: <http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu> or from the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at: <http://childwelfare.gov>.
- Allocate sufficient funds in the budget to support required travel:
  - a. Within 3 months after the award, the project director, child welfare liaison (if different from the project director), evaluator, and youth leadership and/or other key staff must attend a 2- to 3-day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC.
  - b. The project director, the child welfare agency liaison (if different from the project director), and key youth involved in the project, and the evaluator and/or other key staff must attend the annual grantee meeting, usually held in the spring, in Washington, DC.

## II. Award Information

Funding Instrument Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Estimated Total Funding:	\$2,000,000
Expected Number of Awards:	4
Award Ceiling:	\$500,000 Per Budget Period
Award Floor:	\$0 Per Budget Period
Average Projected Award Amount:	\$500,000 Per Budget Period

### Length of Project Periods:

60-month project with five 12-month budget periods

### Additional Information on Awards:

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the availability of Federal funds.

## **Description of ACF's Anticipated Substantial Involvement Under the Cooperative Agreement**

A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding Federal assistance in which substantial Federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of CB and the awardee prior to the award. CB anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes:

- CB review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin;
- CB and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, T/TA, publications or products, and evaluation);
- Close monitoring by CB of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the awardee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered, organizational structure, and management processes; and
- Close monitoring by CB during performance which may, in order to ensure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those Federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

Please see *Section IV.5 Funding Restrictions* for any limitations on the use of grant funds awarded under this announcement.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

### **III.1. Eligible Applicants**

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Native American Tribal governments (Federally-recognized)
- Native American Tribal organizations (other than Federally-recognized Tribal governments)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education

#### **Additional Information on Eligibility**

If the primary applicant responsible for administering the grant is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, the applicant must document a strong partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical areas(s) and court(s) having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population.

Individuals, foreign entities, and sole proprietorship organizations are not eligible to compete for, or receive, awards made under this announcement.

Faith-based and community organizations that meet eligibility requirements are eligible to receive awards under this funding opportunity announcement.

See "Legal Status of Applicant Entity" in *Section IV.2* for documentation required to support eligibility.

### **III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching**

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement: No

### III.3. Other

#### Disqualification Factors

Applications with requests that exceed the ceiling on the amount of individual awards as stated in *Section II. Award Information*, will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement.

Applications that fail to satisfy the due date and time deadline requirements stated in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*, will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement.

See *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* for disqualification information specific to electronically-submitted applications:

- Electronically-submitted applications that do not receive a date/time-stamp email indicating application submission on or before 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date, will be disqualified and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement.
- Electronically-submitted applications that fail the checks and validations at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) because the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) does not have a current registration at the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) at the time of application submission will be disqualified and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement.

## Section IV. Application and Submission Information

### IV.1. Address to Request Application Package

Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at the ACF Funding Opportunities Forms webpage. Standard Forms are also available at the [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) Forms Repository website.

CB Operations Center

c/o LUX Consulting Group

ATTN: Children's Bureau

8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: (866) 796-1591

Email: [cb@luxcg.com](mailto:cb@luxcg.com)

#### Federal Relay Service:

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (TTY - Text Telephone or ASCII - American Standard Code For Information Interchange).

### Section IV.2. Content and Form of Application Submission

## Copies Required:

**If applying in hard copy**, applicants are required to submit one original and two copies of all application materials. **If applying electronically via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)**, applicants must submit one complete copy of the application package electronically. Applicants submitting electronic applications need not provide additional copies of their application materials.

## Signatures:

The original signature of the Authorized Organization Representative (**AOR**) is required only on the original copy of hard copy application submissions. The AOR is named by the applicant, and is authorized to act for the applicant, to assume the obligations imposed by the Federal laws, regulations, requirements, and conditions that apply to the grant application or awards. A point of contact on matters involving the application must also be identified on the SF-424 at item 8f. The point of contact, known as the Project Director or Principal Investigator, should not be identical to the person identified as the AOR.

## Formatting Requirements:

All application materials for both hard copy (mailed or hand delivered) and electronic submissions must be submitted on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper with 1-inch margins. **All pages of the application submission (hard and electronic copies) must be sequentially numbered.** Project Descriptions, narratives, summaries, etc., must be in double-spaced format in 12-point font. Hard copy application materials must be one-sided for duplication purposes. Hard copy application copies (original and two copies) must not be bound, they may be clipped or rubber-banded together.

If an application exceeds the cited page limitation for double-spaced pages in the application narrative or the double-spaced page limitation cited for the appendices and resumes, the extra pages will be removed and will not be reviewed. In addition, if an application narrative is single-spaced and/or one-and-a-half spaced (in whole or in part) the total number of these lines will be doubled. This adjustment may result in an increased total number of pages, which will be removed so that the application conforms to the cited double-spaced page limitation. **Page limitations do not include the required Standard Forms.**

This section also may include instructions on the order of assembly for hard copy (mailed or hand delivered) application submissions. Acceptable formats for applications submitted electronically via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) are MS-Word and Excel, Word Perfect, Adobe PDF, Jpeg and Gif.

Later in this section of the announcement, specific information on page limitations is provided. Information on required Standard Forms and other forms, certifications and assurances, D-U-N-S Numbers and Central Contractor Registration (CCR) requirements, the project description, budget and budget justification requirements, and methods of application submission are also found later in this section (*Section IV.2.*).

A checklist of required application elements is available for applicants' use in *Section VIII. Additional Information*.

## Each application must contain the following items in the order listed:

**Certifications/Assurances.** See *Forms, Assurances, and Certifications*, below.

**Table of Contents.** List the major sections of the application, and show the page that each section begins on.

**Project Summary/Abstract** (one page maximum, single spaced). See *below*, Project Description.

Clearly mark this page with the applicant name as shown on SF-424.

Care should be taken to produce a summary/abstract that accurately and concisely reflects the proposed project.

**The Project Description.** Applicants should organize their project description in this sequence: 1) Objectives and Need for Assistance; 2) Approach; 3) Evaluation; 4) Organizational Profiles; and 5) Budget and Budget Justification.

**Budget and Budget Justification.** See Section IV.2 Budget and Budget Justification.

**Indirect Charges.** If claiming indirect costs, provide documentation that the applicant currently has an indirect cost-rate approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant Federal agency.

**Third-Party Agreements.** If applicable, provide written and signed agreements between grantees and subgrantees, or subcontractors, or other cooperating entities. These agreements must detail the scope of work to be performed, work schedules, remuneration, and other terms and conditions that structure or define the relationship. Note: General letters of support not expressing specific commitments are not required and will not be considered by reviewers under the evaluation criteria.

**Staff and Position Data.** Include job descriptions and *curriculum vitae/resumes* for proposed project staff.

**Page Limit.** The length of the application package, **excluding required Standard Forms**, may be less than, but must not exceed, 100 pages. This includes, but is not limited to, table of contents, project summary, project description, Gantt chart, budget/budget justification, supplemental documentation, proof of non-profit status, summaries of subgrants and subcontracts, letters of agreement, MOUs, resumes, CVs, and any other pages included in the application package. All pages of the application package must be sequentially numbered, beginning with page 1. All pages of each application, **excluding required Standard Forms**, will be counted to determine total length. A cover letter and general letters of support are not required. Applicants are reminded that if a cover letter and general letters of support are submitted, they will count towards the 100-page limit.

#### **General Content and Form Information.**

To be considered for funding, each application must be submitted with the Standard Federal Forms and must follow the guidance provided. The application must be signed by an individual authorized to act for the applicant agency and to assume responsibility for the obligations imposed by the terms and conditions of the award.

The project description must be typed and double-spaced on a single side of 8.5 x 11 inch plain white paper with a least one inch margins on all sides, using black print with 12-point size Times New Roman font.

For charts, budget tables, supplemental letters, and documents, applicants may use a different point size and font, but no less than 10-point size and single spaced.

Applicants that deviate from these format and page limit requirements risk having pages removed from their applications.

*Handling of Mailed or Hand-Delivered Hard Copy Applications*

All copies of these applications must be submitted in a single package. A separate package must be submitted for each funding opportunity. The package must be clearly labeled for the specific funding opportunity it is addressing.

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate subsections of the application, including supporting documentation. Use a clip (not a staple) to securely bind the application together. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the Federal government for review.

**Tips for Preparing a Competitive Application.** It is essential that applicants read the entire announcement package carefully before preparing an application and include all of the required application forms and attachments. The application must reflect a thorough understanding of and support the purpose and objectives of the applicable legislation. Reviewers expect applicants to understand the goals of the legislation and CB's interest in each topic and to address and follow all of the evaluation criteria in ways that demonstrate this understanding. Applications that do not clearly address the evaluation criteria or program requirements generally receive very low scores and are rarely funded.

CB's website (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>) provides a wide range of information and links to other relevant websites. Before preparing an application, applicants can learn more about CB's mission and programs by exploring the website.

**Logic Model.** A logic model is a tool that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the linkages among program elements. While there are many versions of the logic model, they generally summarize the logical connections among the needs that are the focus of the project, project goals and objectives, the target population, project inputs (resources), the proposed activities/processes/outputs directed toward the target population, the expected short- and long-term outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve, and the evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which proposed processes and outcomes actually occur. (*See also IV.2, The Project Description*). Information on the development of logic models is available on the Internet at:

[http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/effectiveness/logic\\_model.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/effectiveness/logic_model.cfm)

**Evaluation.** Project evaluations are very important. If the applicant does not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, comprehensive evaluation of the project, then CB advises that the applicant contract with a third-party evaluator specializing in social science or evaluation, or a university or college, to conduct the evaluation. In either case, it is important that the evaluator has the necessary independence from the project to ensure objectivity. A skilled evaluator can help develop a logic model and assist in designing an evaluation strategy that is rigorous and appropriate given the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Additional assistance may be found in a document titled "Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation." A copy of this document can be accessed at:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other\\_resrch/pm\\_guide\\_eval/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/index.html)

**Protection of Human Subjects.** General information about the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations can be obtained at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/>. Applicants may also contact OHRP by email ([ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov](mailto:ohrp@csophs.dhhs.gov)) or by phone (240-453-6900).

**Organizing the Application.** Reviewers will use the specific evaluation criteria in *Section V* of this funding announcement to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each of these specific evaluation criteria in the project description. Applicants should organize their project description in this sequence: (1) Objectives and Need for Assistance; (2) Approach; (3) Evaluation; (4) Organizational Profiles; and (5) Budget and Budget Justification. The applicant must use the same headings as these criteria, so that reviewers can readily find information that directly addresses each of the specific review criteria.

**Electronic Submission.** Applicants that submit their application electronically are advised to be sure that



they secure and retain their service ticket number for reference whenever they have any interaction with the Grants.gov Contact Center.

### Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Applicants seeking financial assistance under this announcement must submit the listed Standard Forms (SFs), assurances, and certifications. All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available at [ACF Funding Opportunities Forms](#) or at the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#) unless specified otherwise.

Forms / Assurances / Certifications	Submission Requirement	Notes / Description
Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants	Submission is voluntary. Submission may be made with the application or prior to award.	Non-profit private organizations (not including private universities) are encouraged to submit the survey with their applications. Submission of the survey is voluntary. Applicants applying electronically may submit the survey along with the application. Hard copy submissions should include the survey in a separate envelope.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Submission required prior to award.	Form is available at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Submission required for all applicants when applying for a non-construction project by the application due date.	Required for all applications when applying for a non-construction project .
Certification Regarding Lobbying	Submission required of all applicants prior to award.	Required for all applications.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance SF-P/PSL - Project/Performance Site Location(s)	Submission required for all applicants by the application due date.	Required for all applications.



Central Contractor Registration (CCR)	Required for all applicants.	Required for all applicants.
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier)	Required for all applicants.	Required for all applicants.

### **Additional Assurances and Certifications**

The Pro-Children Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. 7181 through 7184, imposes restrictions on smoking in facilities where federally funded children's services are provided. HHS grants are subject to these requirements only if they meet the Act's specified coverage. The Act specifies that smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of kindergarten, elementary, or secondary education or library services to children under the age of 18. In addition, smoking is prohibited in any indoor facility or portion of a facility (owned, leased, or contracted for) used for the routine or regular provision of federally funded health care, day care, or early childhood development, including Head Start services to children under the age of 18. The statutory prohibition also applies if such facilities are constructed, operated, or maintained with Federal funds. The statute does not apply to children's services provided in private residences, facilities funded solely by Medicare or Medicaid funds, portions of facilities used for inpatient drug or alcohol treatment, or facilities where WIC coupons are redeemed. Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may result in the imposition of a civil monetary penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation and/or the imposition of an administrative compliance order on the responsible entity.

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 42 U.S.C. 701 *et seq.*, requires that all organizations receiving grants from any Federal agency agree to maintain a drug-free workplace. The recipient must notify the awarding office if an employee of the recipient is convicted of violating a criminal drug statute. Failure to comply with these requirements may be cause for debarment. HHS implementing regulations are set forth in 45 C.F.R. part 82, "Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)."

The Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters is available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_resources.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html).

By signing and submitting the application, applicants are making the appropriate certification of their compliance with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination.

Additional information on certifications and assurances may be found in the HHS Grants Policy Statement at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/notices.html#policy>.

### **DUNS Number and CCR Registration Requirements**

#### **DUNS Number Requirement**

All applicants and sub-recipients must have a DUNS number (Data Universal Numbering System) at the time of application in order to be considered for a grant or cooperative agreement. A DUNS number is required whether an applicant is submitting a paper application or using the Government-wide electronic portal, [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). A DUNS number is required for every application for a new award or renewal/continuation of an award, including applications or plans under formula, entitlement, and block grant programs. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. To acquire a DUNS number by phone, contact the D&B Government Customer Response Center:

U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711

Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)

Monday - Friday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., c.s.t.

The process to request a D-U-N-S® Number by telephone takes between 5 and 10 minutes.

### **Central Contractor Registration (CCR) Requirement**

Effective October 1, 2010, HHS requires all entities that plan to apply for and ultimately receive Federal grant funds from any HHS Operating/Staff Division (OPDIV) or receivesubawards directly from recipients of those grant funds to:

- Be registered in the CCR prior to submitting an application of plan;
- Maintain an active CCR registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by an OPDIV; and
- Provide its DUNS number in each application or plan it submits to the OPDIV.

An award cannot be made until an applicant has complied with these requirements. At the time an award is ready to be made, if the intended recipient has not complied with these requirements, the OPDIV:

- May determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award; and
- May use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Additionally, all first-tier subaward recipients (i.e., direct subrecipient) must have a DUNS number at the time the subaward is made

CCR registration may be made online at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) or by phone at 1-866-606-8220.

**There is the possibility of heavy traffic at the CCR website at application due dates.**

**Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to register at the CCR well in advance of the application due date. CCR registration must be updated annually. CCR registration must be active and maintained with current information at all times during which an organization has an active award or an application under consideration.**

### **Definitions:**

**Central Contractor Registration (CCR):** The Federal registrant database and repository into which an entity must provide information required for the conduct of business as a recipient. CCR, managed by the General Services Administration, collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of agency financial assistance missions.

**Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number:** The nine-digit, or thirteen-digit (DUNS + 4), number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities.

### **Entity:**

Means all of the following:

- A Governmental organization, which is a State, local government, or Indian tribe;
- A foreign public entity;
- A domestic or foreign for-profit organization; and
- A Federal agency, but only as a subrecipient under an award or subaward to a non-Federal entity.

**Subaward:** This term means a legal instrument to provide support for the performance of any portion of the substantive project or program for which you received this award and that the recipient awards to an

eligible subrecipient.

- This term does not include the procurement of property and services needed to carry out the project or program (for further explanation, see Sec. --.210 of the attachment to OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations").
- A subaward may be provided through any legal agreement, including an agreement that the grantee or a subrecipient consider to be a contract.

**First Tier Subrecipient:** An entity that receives a subaward from a prime grantee and is accountable to the prime for the use of the Federal funds provided by the subaward.

## The Project Description

### Part I: The Project Description Overview

The project description provides the majority of information by which an application is evaluated and ranked in competition with other applications for available assistance. The project description should be concise and complete. It should address the activity for which Federal funds are being requested. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. In preparing the project description, information that is responsive to each of the requested evaluation criteria must be provided. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their funding recommendations. It is important, therefore, that this information be included in the application in a manner that is clear and complete.

### General Expectations and Instructions

ACF is particularly interested in specific project descriptions that focus on outcomes and convey strategies for achieving intended performance. Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length. Extensive exhibits are not required. Cross-referencing should be used rather than repetition. Supporting information concerning activities that will not be directly funded by the grant or information that does not directly pertain to an integral part of the grant-funded activity should be placed in an appendix.

### Part II: General Instructions for Preparing a Full Project Description

#### Introduction

Applicants that are required to submit a full project description shall prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following instructions while being aware of the specified evaluation criteria. The topics listed in this section provide a broad overview of what the project description should include while the Criteria in *Section V.I.* identify the measures that will be used to evaluate applications.

#### Table of Contents

List the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers.

#### Project Summary/Abstract

Provide a summary of the application's project description. The summary must be clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application. The abstract must include a brief description of the proposed grant project including the needs to be addressed, the proposed services, and the population group(s) to be served.

Please place the following at the top of the abstract:

- Project Title
- Applicant Name
- Address
- Contact Phone Numbers (Voice, Fax)
- E-Mail Address

- Web Site Address, if applicable

The project abstract must be single-spaced and limited to one page in length.

### **Objectives And Need For Assistance**

Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance including the nature and scope of the problem must be demonstrated, and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly and concisely stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies or needs assessments should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as needed. In developing the project description, the applicant may volunteer or be requested to provide information on the total range of projects currently being conducted and supported (or to be initiated), some of which may be outside the scope of the program announcement.

### **Outcomes Expected**

Identify the outcomes to be derived from the project.

Proposals should include the following information:

1. A preliminary list of targeted outcomes for youth relevant to the target population.
2. Description of how the programs or practices implemented to improve the outcomes of youth at risk of aging out of foster care or youth who aged out but are still involved with the foster care system will be sustained after Federal assistance has ended.

### **Approach**

Outline a plan of action that describes the scope and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work and state your reason for taking the proposed approach rather than others. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of activities accomplished. Data may be organized and presented as project tasks and subtasks with their corresponding timelines during the project period. For example, each project task could be assigned to a row in the first column of a grid. Then, a unit of time could be assigned to each subsequent column, beginning with the first unit (i.e., week, month, quarter) of the project and ending with the last. Shading, arrows, or other markings could be used across the applicable grid boxes or cells, representing units of time, to indicate the approximate duration and/or frequency of each task and its start and end dates within the project period.

When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

Provide a list of organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals who will work on the project, along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Proposals should include the following information:

1. Analysis of the data for the population to be served including:
  - Distribution of ages;
  - Age of entry into care;
  - Permanency goal;
  - Average number of placements;
  - Placement types of the target youth;
  - Length of stay;
  - Average number of school changes;
  - Percent that emancipates from the system without achieving permanency;
  - Size and characteristics of the applicant's target population relative to the larger child welfare population; and
  - Other information relevant to the population.
2. Current activities present in the target community and at the State level to engage older youth and young adults, including youth advisory boards, sibling camps, and youth leadership activities that can be used to ensure the project effectively engages youth;
3. Current system of independent living services in the State, including description of services to biological families and youth in foster care as the youth transitions to adulthood;
4. Identify how youth have been engaged in developing this grant application and in the work designed to facilitate the submission of the application, including how and what supports would be provided to support continued youth participation in the project if this proposal is funded;
5. Current laws, policies, and procedures relative to visiting with biological family, siblings, and former foster parents, for older youth, including those whose rights have been terminated;
6. Current policies and procedures relating to prevention of removal and reunification services for older youth;
7. Justification that the proposed approach or services will address the identified areas of need based on existing research/evidence;
8. Identification of promising models, programs, services and/or practices proposed for implementation that will be reviewed and approved by CB, if appropriate, at the end of the planning phase of the project;
9. Description of the how services, program activities, and materials will be developed and provided in a manner that is racially and culturally sensitive to the population being served;
10. Applicants in large jurisdictions proposing a staged approach to project implementation should describe the process for introducing and evaluating the new approach at each successive stage of implementation;
11. Arrangements for technical assistance to sites and front line staff implementing new practices including, when applicable, collaboration with the original designer/developer of the model(s) selected to support the replication effort, to ensure fidelity to the model(s) and provide for quality service provision;
12. Description of the process, including timeframes, that will be used during the Assessment/Planning Phase to further develop and fine-tune the plan, and during the Implementation Phase to implement the proposed project, including the activities to be conducted in chronological order, showing a reasonable schedule of accomplishments and target dates, and the factors that may accelerate or decelerate the work;
13. Evidence that the proposed project is commensurate with the level of funding provided in this announcement;
14. Description of the administrative structure for the project, including the lead agency responsible for

implementing the plan, providing management and oversight for the proposed initiative, and coordinating with the other partner agencies, the relevant partners, including the courts, and the proposed roles and level of commitment of the agencies, and service providers that have entered into partnership with the applicant, as evidenced by a letter of intent or memorandum of understanding. If the primary applicant is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, the applicant must document a strong partnership(s) and willingness to be actively involved with the project on the part of the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s);

15. Description of key personnel, their roles and how they will ensure their continued support throughout the project;

16. Description of how youth and other consumers of services will be involved in the planning and on-going implementation of the project;

17. Description of a framework for how positive youth development principals and strategies will take into account the needs of youth who have experienced multiple adverse life experiences and how the framework will be implemented throughout the project;

18. The strategy for effective dissemination of information about the project's innovative interventions strategies and their effectiveness;

19. Description of productive linkages with appropriate agencies, organizations, and resources on the local, regional, State, Tribal or Federal levels, including those funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB);

20. The status of the State's implementation of the National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD) and how the data collections might be used as part of the evaluation of the project's impact on relevant outcomes of the youth in the grantee's target population; and

21. A logic model or other document to detail how inputs will lead to outcomes.

#### *Other Aspects to Consider in the Application*

- How to include the relationship between youth and their fathers in a meaningful way.
- Use of social media to connect youth with family and other relatives in a meaningful and safe way.
- How to allow youth to access their records from the child welfare system as a method to identify important connections.
- Promising practices around well-being, resiliency factors, and protective mechanisms of youth whose biological parents have ongoing substance abuse or mental health issues.
- How the loss of the relationship of a caseworker or independent living specialist impacts youth.
- What services and other supports are available to determine a full medical history of the youth and to provide this information in a meaningful way.
- Learn the complex relationship between having a relationship with someone that you can "visit" versus one where the adult can "parent" or provide meaningful support (Jones & Kruk, 2005).
- How to partner with street outreach services funded by FYSB in order to best engage youth who have run away from foster care to determine which services would best suit the unique needs of these youth.
- How youth will be involved in key leadership activities, including full-time and part-time employment opportunities for youth in foster care, or formerly in foster care and that project participants will have significant interaction with youth councils, youth advisory boards, coalitions, and youth partnerships.
- The extent to which the program demonstrates an understanding of positive youth development in the context of youth who have experienced multiple adverse life experiences and an approach to incorporating positive youth development elements and other protective mechanisms.
- Describe efforts made to involve youth in the planning of the grant application, such as meetings

and conferences with youth advisory boards, youth advocacy groups, and other youth in the foster care or youth who have aged out of foster care.

- Describe how youth in the foster care system, or youth who have aged out, will be involved in the proposed project, with a special emphasis on those who do not traditionally utilize the services of the system.
- Emphasis of youth participation and leadership development in the planning, organization, and implementation of strategies and activities appropriate to achieving the project's goal and increasing opportunities for these young people.

## **Evaluation**

Provide a narrative addressing how the conduct of the project and its results will be evaluated. In addressing the evaluation of results, state what measures will be used to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and the extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project. Discuss the criteria to be used to evaluate results, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine if the needs identified and discussed are being met and if the project results and benefits are being achieved. With respect to the conduct of the project, define the procedures to be employed to determine whether the project is being conducted in a manner consistent with the work plan presented and discuss the impact of the project's various activities that address the project's effectiveness.

## **Legal Status of Applicant Entity**

Applicants must provide the following documentation of their legal status:

### **Proof of Non-Profit Status**

Non-profit organizations applying for funding are required to submit proof of their non-profit status. Proof of non-profit status is any one of the following:

- A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the IRS's most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code.
- A copy of a currently valid IRS tax-exemption certificate.
- A statement from a State taxing body, State attorney general, or other appropriate State official certifying that the applicant organization has non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals.
- A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status.
- Any of the items in the subparagraphs immediately above for a State or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate.

When applying electronically, proof of non-profit status may be submitted as an attachment; however, proof of non-profit status must be submitted prior to award.

## **Logic Model**

Applicants are expected to use a model for designing and managing their project. A logic model is a tool that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the linkages among program elements. While there are many versions of the logic model, they generally summarize the logical connections among the needs that are the focus of the project, project goals and objectives, the target population, project inputs (resources), the proposed activities/processes/outputs directed toward the target population, the expected short- and long-term outcomes the initiative is designed to achieve, and the evaluation plan for measuring the extent to which proposed processes and outcomes actually occur.

## **Project Sustainability Plan**

Provide a plan for sustainability that details how the proposed project approach will create project self-sufficiency and help to ensure that the impact of the project will continue after Federal assistance has ended. The applicant may include information on plans to secure additional financial resources.

### **Organizational Capacity**

- Organizational charts
- Contact persons and telephone numbers
- Documentation of experience in the program area
- Any other pertinent information the applicant deems relevant.

Provide a biographical sketch or resume for each key person appointed. Resumes should be no more than two pages in length. Job descriptions for each vacant key position should be included as well. As new key staff are appointed, biographical sketches or resumes will also be required.

### **Dissemination Plan**

Provide a plan for distributing reports and other project outputs to colleagues and to the public. Applicants must provide a description of the method, volume, and timing of distribution.

### **Third-Party Agreements**

Provide written and signed agreements between grantees and subgrantees, or subcontractors, or other cooperating entities. These agreements must detail the scope of work to be performed, work schedules, remuneration, and other terms and conditions that structure or define the relationship.

### **Budget and Budget Justification**

Provide a budget with line-item detail and detailed calculations for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information Form (SF-424A or SF-424C). Detailed calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. If matching is a requirement, include a breakout by the funding sources identified in Block 18 of the SF-424.

Provide a narrative budget justification for each year of the proposed project. The narrative budget justification should describe how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocation of the proposed costs.

### **General**

Use the following guidelines for preparing the budget and budget justification. Both Federal and non-Federal resources (when required) shall be detailed and justified in the budget and budget narrative justification. "Federal resources" refers only to the ACF grant funds for which you are applying. "Non-Federal resources" are all other non-ACF Federal and non-Federal resources. It is suggested that budget amounts and computations be presented in a columnar format: first column, object class categories; second column, Federal budget; next column(s), non-Federal budget(s); and last column, total budget. The budget justification should be in a narrative form.

### **Personnel**

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known at the time of application. For each staff person, provide: the title; time commitment to the project in months; time commitment to the project as a percentage or full-time equivalent; annual salary; grant salary; wage rates; etc. Do not include the costs of consultants, personnel costs of delegate agencies, or of specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.



## **Fringe Benefits**

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes, retirement insurance, taxes, etc.

## **Travel**

Description: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization. (This item does not include costs of consultant travel).

Justification: For each trip show: the total number of traveler(s); travel destination; duration of trip; per diem; mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used to travel out of town; and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. If appropriate for this project, travel costs for key staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops should be detailed in the budget.

## **Equipment**

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of: (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation, shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.)

Justification: For each type of equipment requested provide: a description of the equipment; the cost per unit; the number of units; the total cost; and a plan for use on the project; as well as use and/or disposal of the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy, or section of its policy, that includes the equipment definition.

## **Supplies**

Description: Costs of all tangible personal property other than that included under the Equipment category.

Justification: Specify general categories of supplies and their costs. Show computations and provide other information that supports the amount requested.

## **Contractual**

Description: Costs of all contracts for services and goods except for those that belong under other categories such as equipment, supplies, construction, etc. Include thirdparty evaluation contracts, if applicable, and contracts with secondary recipient organizations, including delegate agencies and specific project(s) and/or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

Justification: Demonstrate that all procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. Recipients and subrecipients, other than States that are required to use 45 CFR Part 92 procedures, must justify any anticipated procurement action that is expected to be awarded without competition and exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold fixed at 41 U.S.C. 403(11), currently set at \$100,000. Recipients may be required to make pre-award review and procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc. available to ACF.

Note: Whenever the applicant intends to delegate part of the project to another agency, the applicant must provide a detailed budget and budget narrative for each delegate agency, by agency title, along with the same supporting information referred to in these instructions.

### **Other**

Description: Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to: local travel; insurance; food; medical and dental costs (noncontractual); professional services costs; space and equipment rentals; printing and publication; computer use; training costs, such as tuition and stipends; staff development costs; and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description and a justification for each cost under this category.

### **Indirect Charges**

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category should be used only when the applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant Federal agency.

Justification: An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. If the applicant organization is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, upon notification that an award will be made, it should immediately develop a tentative indirect cost rate proposal based on its most recently completed fiscal year, in accordance with the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost proposals may also request indirect costs. When an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not be charged as direct costs to the grant. Also, if the applicant is requesting a rate that is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

### **Program Income**

Description: The estimated amount of income, if any, expected to be generated from this project.

Justification: Describe the nature, source and anticipated use of program income in the budget or refer to the pages in the application that contain this information.

### **Paperwork Reduction Disclaimer**

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501-3520, the public reporting burden for the Project Description is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection information. The Project Description information collection is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139, which expires 11/30/2012. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

## **Application Submission Options**

### **Electronic Submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov)**

- ACF will not accept applications via facsimile or email.
- The Funding Opportunity Announcement is found on the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov> where the electronic application can be downloaded for completion.
- To apply electronically, applicants and sub-recipients must be registered with Grants.gov, Dun and

Bradstreet (DUNS Number), and the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

- All pages of the application package must be sequentially numbered.
- Electronically submitted applications must be received and time/date stamped by the due date and receipt time described in this announcement in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*.
- To submit an application through Grants.gov, the applicant must be the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) for their organization and must have current registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).
- **Central Contractor Registry (CCR) registration must be updated annually.** As of October 1, 2010, all applicants, and sub-recipients are required to have CCR registration in order to apply for Federal grants and cooperative agreements.
- Electronically submitted applications will not pass the validation check at Grants.gov if the AOR does not have a current CCR registration and electronic signature credentials.
- Electronically submitted applications will not pass the validation check at Grants.gov if the AOR does not have a current CCR registration and electronic signature credentials.
- Applications rejected by Grants.gov for an unregistered AOR will be disqualified and will not be considered for competition.
- Additional guidance on the submission of electronic applications can be found at the [Grants.gov Registration Checklist](#).
- If difficulties are encountered in using Grants.gov, applicants must contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800-518-4726, or by email at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov), to report the problem and obtain assistance. Hours of Operation: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Grants.gov Contact Center is closed on Federal holidays.
- Applicants should retain Grants.gov Contact Center service ticket number(s) as they may be needed for future reference.
- Applicants that submit their applications electronically should retain a hard copy of their application package.
- It is to an applicant's advantage to submit their applications at least 24 hours in advance of the closing date and time.
- Applicants should not wait until the due date for applications to begin submission of their application.

**Contact with the Grants.gov Contact Center prior to the listed due date and time does not ensure acceptance of your application. If difficulties are encountered, ACF's Grants Management Officer (GMO) will make a determination whether the issues are due to Grants.gov system errors or user error.**

## **Hard Copy Submission**

Applicants that are submitting their applications in hard copy format, by mail or delivery, must submit one original and two copies of the complete application with all attachments. The original and each of the two copies must include all required forms, certifications, assurances, and appendices, be signed by the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and be unbound. The original copy of the application must have original signature(s). See *Section IV.6* of this announcement for address information for hard copy application submissions.

Applications submitted in hard copy must show a DUNS Number. A DUNS Number is a nine-digit number established and assigned by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities. A DUNS number may be acquired at no cost online at <http://www.dnb.com>. To acquire a DUNS number by phone, contact the D&B Government Customer Response Center: U.S. and U.S. Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711; Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1).

Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., c.s.t.

As of October 1, 2010, all applicants for Federal grants and cooperative agreements, including those that apply in paper format, are required to have Central Contractor Registration. CCR registration is also required for organizations that will receive subawards under Federal grants and cooperative agreements. CCR registration may be made online at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) or by phone at 1-866-606-8220.

CCR registration must be updated annually from the date of the initial registration. CCR registration is required to be active throughout the period of award. Lack of CCR registration will prevent ACF from making an award to a recommended applicant.

**There is the possibility of heavy traffic at the CCR website at application due dates. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to register at the CCR well in advance of the application due date. CCR registration must be updated annually. CCR registration must be active and maintained with current information at all times during which an organization has an active award or an application under consideration.**

Applicants may refer to *Section VIII. Other Information* for a checklist of application requirements that may be used in developing and organizing application materials. Details concerning acknowledgment of received applications are available in *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times* of this announcement.

#### **IV.3. Submission Dates and Times**

Due Date for Applications: **07/19/2011**

##### **Explanation of Due Dates**

The due date for receipt of applications is listed in the *Overview* and in this section. Applications received after 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date will be classified as late and will not be considered in the current competition.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that applications are received by mail, hand-delivery, or submitted electronically well in advance of the application due date and time.

##### **Mailed Applications**

Mailed applications must be **received** no later than 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date, listed in the *Overview* and in this section, at the address provided in *Section IV.6* of this announcement. Applications received after the stated due date and time will be designated as late and will be disqualified from competition.

##### **Hand-Delivered Applications**

Applications that are hand-delivered by applicants, applicant couriers, other representatives of the applicant, or by overnight/express mail couriers must be **received** on, or before, the due date listed in the *Overview* and in this section, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., eastern time, Monday through Friday (excluding Federal holidays). Applications should be delivered to the address provided in *Section IV.6* of this announcement. Applications received after the stated due date and time will be designated as late and will be disqualified from competition.

##### **Electronically-Submitted Applications**

ACF does not accommodate transmission of applications by facsimile or email. Instructions for electronic

submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) may be found at the [Grants.gov Registration Checklist](#).

Electronically-submitted applications must be **received and validated** at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date.

Upon submission and receipt of an application via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov), the applicant will receive three emails:

1. Acknowledgement of the application's submission to [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). This email will provide a **Grants.gov tracking number**. Applicants should refer to this tracking number in all communication with Grants.gov. The email will also provide a **date and time-stamp, which serves as the official record of application submission**. The date and time-stamp must reflect a submission time on, or before, 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the application due date for the application to be considered as meeting the due date. Applications received at Grants.gov after the due date and time will be disqualified.
2. Acknowledgement from Grants.gov that the submitted application package has passed, or failed, a series of checks and validations. Applications received on the due date that fail the validation check on, or after, 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date because the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) is not registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) will be determined to be late and will not be considered for the review. Applications that do not pass the validation check at Grants.gov after the due date and time will be disqualified.
3. An additional email from ACF will be sent to the applicant indicating that the application has been retrieved from [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) by ACF.

### **Late Applications**

**No appeals will be considered for applications classified as late under the following circumstances:**

- Hard-copy applications received after 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date will be classified as late and will be disqualified.
- Electronically-submitted applications are considered late, and are disqualified, when the date and time-stamp received by email from [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) is after 4:30 p.m., eastern time, on the due date.
- Electronically-submitted applications submitted by an AOR that does not have a current registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) will be rejected by Grants.gov. Although the applicant may have an acceptable dated and time-stamped email from Grants.gov, these applications are considered late and are disqualified.

### **Extension/Waiver of Due Date and Receipt Time**

ACF may extend an application due date and receipt time when circumstances such as natural disasters occur (floods, hurricanes, etc.); when there are widespread disruptions of mail service; or in other rare cases. The determination to extend or waive the due date and receipt time requirements rests with ACF's Chief Grants Management Officer.

### **Acknowledgement of Received Application**

ACF will not provide acknowledgement of receipt of hard copy application packages submitted via mail or courier services.

Upon submission of an application electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>, the applicant will receive three emails:

1. Acknowledgement of the application's submission to Grants.gov. This email will provide a **Grants.gov tracking number**. The email will also provide a **date and time-stamp, which serves as the official record of application submission**.
2. Your application has been validated and provides a Time/Date Stamp. See the previous section on failing the validation check because of an unregistered Authorized Organization Representative (AOR).
3. An email will be sent to the applicant from ACF indicating that the application has been retrieved from Grants.gov by ACF.

#### IV.4. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs

#### IV.5. Funding Restrictions

Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions, are considered unallowable costs under grants awarded under this announcement.

#### IV.6. Other Submission Requirements

Submit applications to one of the following addresses:

##### Submission By Mail

CB Operations Center  
c/o Lux Consulting Group  
8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

##### Hand Delivery

CB Operations Center  
c/o Lux Consulting Group  
8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

##### Electronic Submission

See *Section IV.2* for application requirements and for guidance when submitting applications electronically via <http://www.Grants.gov>.

For all submissions, see *Section IV.3* for information on due dates and times.

### V. Application Review Information

#### V.1. Criteria

Objectives and Need for Assistance

Maximum Points: 25

In reviewing the objectives and need for assistance, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The application demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the relevant legislation and this FOA.
2. The proposed project will contribute to achieving those legislative goals and objectives and the goals stated in this FOA.
3. The application presents a clear description of the proposed project, including a clear statement of the goals (i.e., the intended end products of an effective project) and objectives (i.e., measurable steps for reaching these goals) of the proposed project.
4. The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of the need for agencies to develop and implement programs for the target population specified in this FOA, as well as the need for these programs.
5. The application demonstrates a thorough understanding of the need to assess the characteristics of the target population, including distribution of ages, age of entry into care, permanency goal, average number of placements, placement types of the target youth, length of stay, average number of school changes, percent that emancipates from the system without achieving permanency, size and characteristics of the applicant's target population relative to the larger child welfare population, and any other information relevant to the population.
6. The applicant provides a rationale for selection and documents the strength of empirical support for the intervention to be implemented, including evidence of effectiveness of the intervention and whether it has been applied previously with similar populations.

#### **Approach**

**Maximum Points: 40**

In reviewing the approach, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The application provides a reasonable timeline for implementing the proposed project, including major milestones and target dates. The application describes the factors that could speed or hinder project implementation and explains how these factors would be managed.
2. A well-defined logic model guides the proposed project. The logic model demonstrates strong links between proposed inputs and activities and intended short- and long-term outcomes.
3. The application clearly defines the geographic and demographic characteristics of the agency's service population and the target population to be affected by the implementation of this grant/cooperative agreement. The proposed target population meets the requirements described in this FOA.
4. The proposed project will provide for the development and implementation of a comprehensive multi-faceted framework and set of services that impacts the target population for this FOA to promote the capacity of youth to develop healthy relations and to transition to a permanent family and adulthood.
5. The State, county or Tribal child welfare agency is the lead agency or a key partner and will take an active role in the project throughout the entire length of the project.
6. The plan is integrated with other agency programs to facilitate collaboration and coordination.
7. The approach addresses each of the planning period and implementation period requirements listed in this FOA. There is a detailed description of the activities the program proposes to implement during the planning period and during the implementation period.
8. The proposed project is likely to enhance child welfare agency capacity to improve outcomes for youth at risk of aging out, or who have aged out but are still involved with the foster care system. The proposed project will increase capacity to improve processes and practices outcomes for youth aging out



of foster care.

9. The proposed services would involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery. If collaboration is proposed, there are letters of commitment or memoranda of understanding from organizations, agencies, and consultants that will be partners, subcontractors, or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents describe the role of the agency, organization, or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.
10. The project would be culturally responsive to the target population.
11. The design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from the research and literature on known effective practices and builds on current theory, research, evaluation data, and best practices. The project is innovative and would contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problems and issues addressed by this FOA. The project is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.
12. The proposed project would develop into a model site for other jurisdictions to look to in developing the ability to implement comprehensive, multi-faceted plans as an ongoing part of agency functions. The project would develop products and provide information on strategies used and the outcomes achieved that would support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field. The schedule for developing these products is appropriate in scope and budget.
13. The intended audience (e.g., researchers, policymakers, practitioners) for product dissemination is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project. The project's products would be useful to the identified audiences; the plan for disseminating information is appropriate; and the mechanisms and forums that would be used to convey the information and support replication by other interested agencies are appropriate. The proposed dissemination plan is appropriate in scope and budget.
14. The proposed project would be integrated into the grantee's ongoing practices with the goal of continuous data-informed outcomes that will improve outcomes for the target population.
15. The applicant clearly describes a sound plan for conducting a cost analysis of the proposed program, lists the factors which would be considered in this analysis, and describes the plan for comparing the program to other similar programs with respect to these factors.
16. The applicant demonstrates an understanding of the level of effort required to collect and report cost data. If applicable, letters of commitment from project partners to provide data relevant to the cost evaluation are provided.
17. There is a sound plan for continuing this project beyond the period of Federal funding under this FOA.

## **Evaluation**

**Maximum Points: 20**

In reviewing the evaluation plan, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant proposes a clear and convincing plan for evaluating the project and satisfies the requirements for the evaluation published in this FOA. The methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and context of the project. The evaluation plan is strongly guided by the project's logic model. The project's evaluation plan would rigorously measure achievement of project objectives, customer satisfaction, acquisition of competencies, effectiveness of program services and project strategies, the efficiency of the implementation processes, changes in practices, and the impact of the project on the outcomes for youth at risk of aging out or who have aged out but are still involved with the foster care system.
2. The evaluation plan outlines an appropriate sampling plan that ensures sample sizes sufficient to



detect significant effects. The target sample represents the intended recipients of the services to the greatest extent possible given the project's structure and resources.

3. The evaluation plan includes an appropriate control or comparison group for determining the influence of the project activities on outcomes. If a comparison group is not proposed, the applicant provides a reasonable explanation for not using a comparison group and offers another, equally rigorous approach to evaluating the influence of the program on outcomes. This comparison group and the program/treatment group are assigned at random or matched on key characteristics. If not assigned at random or matched on key characteristics, the applicant provides a reasonable explanation of how it will identify and address any pre-existing differences between the comparison group and the program/treatment group.

4. The applicant proposes a sound plan for collecting high-quality data on the services provided, the costs of these services, the outcomes of these services, and their cost effectiveness. The methods of evaluation include the use of strong measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the program as identified in the project logic model. The evaluation includes measures of outcomes, in addition to measures of inputs and outputs. The measures are objective and have strong reliability, validity, and internal consistency. There is a sound plan for securing informed consent and implementing an IRB review, if applicable.

5. The applicant either demonstrates that they have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective and rigorous evaluation of the project or presents a sound plan for contracting with a third-party evaluator. The proposed evaluator has sufficient experience with research and/or evaluation, understands the population of interest, and demonstrates the necessary independence from the project to assure objectivity.

6. The application provides an appropriate, feasible, and realistic plan for using evaluation findings to produce ongoing documentation of project activities and results. The evaluation plan includes performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary, and serve as a basis for program adjustments.

7. If the primary applicant responsible for administering the cooperative agreement is a non-profit organization or institution of higher education, there is documentation of a strong partnership with the public child welfare agency(ies) with responsibility for administering the child welfare program(s) in the targeted geographical area(s) and court(s) having jurisdiction over the targeted child welfare population. This documentation includes the following:

- Letter(s) of commitment or MOU(s) from the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and courts, which describe, in detail, the roles and responsibilities of the project partners;
- Evidence that the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) fully understand, and are fully committed to the proposed project, and demonstrate a willingness to be fully engaged in the activities that are described in the application;
- Evidence that the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) will follow through on these commitments, regardless of changes in administration, economic status, or other foreseeable factors; and
- Evidence that would demonstrate the full commitment of the relevant public child welfare agency(ies) and court(s) to making the proposed project a success.

## **Organizational Capacity**

**Maximum Points: 10**

In reviewing the organizational profiles, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. The applicant's organization and any partnering organizations collectively have relevant experience and expertise with administration, development, implementation, management, and evaluation of programs. Each participating organization (including partners and/or subcontractors) possesses the organizational capability to fulfill its assigned roles and functions effectively.
2. The proposed project director and key project staff demonstrate sufficient relevant knowledge, experience, and capabilities (such as shown in a resume) to effectively institute and manage a project of this size, scope, and complexity. The role, responsibilities, and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners, is clearly defined (such as a job description) and appropriate to the successful implementation of the proposed project.
3. There is a sound management plan for achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks and ensuring quality. The plan clearly defines the role and responsibilities of the lead agency. The plan clearly describes the effective management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants (if applicable).
4. There would be a mutually beneficial relationship between the proposed project and other work planned, anticipated, or underway with Federal assistance by the applicant.

#### **Budget and Budget Justification**

**Maximum Points: 5**

In reviewing the budget and budget justification, reviewers will consider the extent to which:

1. There is a detailed narrative budget justification for each year of the project. The costs of the proposed project are reasonable, in view of the activities to be conducted and expected results and benefits. The budget includes the costs associated with travel to grantee meetings in Washington, DC.
2. The applicant's fiscal controls and accounting procedures would ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this FOA.

#### **V.2. Review and Selection Process**

No grant award will be made under this announcement on the basis of an incomplete application. No grant award will be made to an applicant or sub-recipient that does not have active CCR registration ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) or 1-866-606-8220).

##### **Initial ACF Screening**

Each application will be screened to determine whether it was received by the closing date and time and whether the requested amount exceeds the award ceiling. Applications that are designated as late according to *Section IV.3. Submission Dates and Times*, or those with requests that exceed the award ceiling, stated in *Section II. Award Information*, will receive a screen-out letter noting that the application was deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for competitive review or funding under this announcement. For those applications that have been deemed disqualified under the initial ACF screening, notice will be given of such determination by postal mail.

##### **Objective Review and Results**

Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in *Section V.1* of this announcement. Each panel is made up of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels are composed of three

reviewers and one chairperson.

Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. They are one element in the decision-making process.

ACF may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial problems that would indicate an inability to successfully complete the proposed project. Applications may be funded in whole or in part. Successful applicants may be funded at an amount lower than that requested. ACF reserves the right to consider preferences to fund organizations serving emerging, unserved, or under-served populations, including those populations located in pockets of poverty. ACF will also consider the geographic distribution of Federal funds in its award decisions.

### **Approved but Unfunded Applications**

Applications recommended for approval that were not funded under the competition because of the lack of available funds, may be held over by ACF and re-considered in a subsequent review cycle if a future competition under the program area is planned. These applications will be held over for a period of up to one year and will be re-competed for funding with all other competing applications in the next available review cycle. For those applications that have been deemed as approved but unfunded, notice will be given of such determination by postal mail.

## **V.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

Applications will be reviewed during the Summer of 2011. Cooperative agreement awards will have a start date no later than September 30, 2011.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **VI.1. Award Notices**

Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Financial Assistance Award (FAA) document that sets forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-Federal share to be provided (if applicable), and the total project period for which support is contemplated. The FAA will be signed by the Grants Officer and transmitted via postal mail. Following the finalization of funding decisions, organizations whose applications will not be funded will be notified by letter, signed by the Program Office head.

Other correspondence announcing to a Principal Investigator or Project Director that an application was selected is not an authorization to begin performance. Costs incurred before receipt of a FAA are at the recipient's risk and may be reimbursed only to extent considered allowable as approved pre-award costs.

### **VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the uniform administrative requirements and cost principles of 45 C.F.R. Part 74 (Awards And Subawards To Institutions Of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Nonprofit Organizations, And Commercial Organizations) or 45 C.F.R. Part 92 (Grants And Cooperative Agreements To State, Local, And Tribal Governments). The Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) is available at [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/).

An application funded with the release of Federal funds through a grant award, does not constitute, or

imply, compliance with Federal regulations. Funded organizations are responsible for ensuring that their activities comply with all applicable Federal regulations.

### **Prohibition Against Profit**

Grantees are subject to the limitations set forth in 45 C.F.R. Part 74, Subpart E-Special Provisions for Awards to Commercial Organizations (45 C.F.R. Part 74.81 \_Prohibition against profit), which states that, "... no HHS funds may be paid as profit to any recipient even if the recipient is a commercial organization. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs."

### **Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations**

Grantees are also subject to the requirements of 45 C.F.R. Part 87.1(c), Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which says, "Organizations that receive direct financial assistance from the Department under any Department program may not engage in inherently religious activities such as religious instruction, worship, or proselytization as part of the programs or services funded with direct financial assistance from the Department." Therefore, organizations must take steps to separate, in time or location, their inherently religious activities from the services funded under this program.

A faith-based organization receiving HHS funds retains its independence from Federal, State, and local governments, and may continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs. For example, a faith-based organization may use space in its facilities to provide secular programs or services funded with Federal funds without removing religious art, icons, scriptures, or other religious symbols. In addition, a faith-based organization that receives Federal funds retains its authority over its internal governance, and it may retain religious terms in its organization's name, select its board members on a religious basis, and include religious references in its organization's mission statements and other governing documents in accordance with all program requirements, statutes, and other applicable requirements governing the conduct of HHS funded activities.

Regulations pertaining to the Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations, which includes the prohibition against Federal funding of inherently religious activities, and additional information on "Understanding the Regulations Related to the Faith-Based and Community Initiative" are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci/regulations/index.html>.

The Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) is available at [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/).

### **Award Term and Condition under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000**

Awards issued under this announcement are subject to the requirements of Section 106 (g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104). For the full text of the award term, go to [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/award\\_term.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/award_term.html). If you are unable to access this link, please contact the Grants Management Contact identified in Section VII. Agency Contacts of this announcement to obtain a copy of the Term.

### **HHS Grants Policy Statement**

The HHS Grants Policy Statement (HHS GPS) is the Department of Health and Human Services' single policy guide for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. ACF grant awards are subject to the requirements of the HHS GPS, which covers basic grants processes, standard terms and conditions, and points of contact, as well as important agency-specific requirements. Appendices to the HHS GPS include a glossary of terms and a list of standard abbreviations for ease of reference. The general terms and

conditions in the HHS GPS will apply as indicated unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary that are specified in the Financial Assistance Award (FAA). The HHS GPS is available at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_related.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_related.html).

### **VI.3. Reporting**

Grantees under this announcement will be required to submit performance progress and financial reports periodically throughout the project period. The frequency of required reporting is listed later in this section. Final reports may be submitted in hard copy to the Grants Management Office Contact listed in *Section VII. Agency Contacts* of this announcement. Instructions on submission of reports electronically will be provided with award documents.

#### **Performance Progress Reports (PPR)**

ACF grantees are required to submit the SF-PPR Cover Page. ACF Programs that utilize reporting forms or formats in addition to, or instead of, the SF-PPR have listed the reporting requirements later in this section.

Grant award documents will inform grantees of the appropriate performance progress report form or format to use. Grantees should consult their award documents to determine the appropriate performance progress report format required under their award. Performance progress reports are due 30 days after the end of the reporting period.

Final program performance reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. The SF-PPR may be found at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_resources.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html).

#### **Federal Financial Reports (FFR)**

As of February 1, 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) began the transition from use of the SF-269, Financial Status Report (Short Form or Long Form) to the use of the SF-425 Federal Financial Report for expenditure reporting. SF-269s will no longer be accepted for expenditure reports due after that date. If an SF-269 is submitted, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) will return it and require the recipient to complete the SF-425.

The transition strategy is allowing individual HHS Operating Divisions to select--from a limited number of options--the approach that best fits their programs and business process. This transition does not affect completion or submission of the cash reporting to the HHS Division of Payment Management's Payment Management System (PMS). The primary features of this transition for recipients are that OPDIVs that previously required electronic submission of the SF-269 will receive the SF-425 expenditure reports electronically and, until further notice, OPDIVs that have been receiving expenditure reports in hard copy will continue to do so.

All expenditure reports will be due on one of the standard due dates by which cash reporting is required to be submitted to PMS OR at the end of a calendar quarter as determined by the Operating Division. As a result, a recipient that receives awards from more than one OPDIV may be subject to more than one approach, but will not be required to change its current means of submission or be subjected to more than eight standard due dates.

Beginning with budget periods which end from January 1 - March 31, 2011, and for all budget periods thereafter, all affected ACF grantees will be required to submit an SF-425 report as frequently as is required in the terms and conditions of their award using due dates for reports to PMS.

**For budget periods ending in the months of:      The FFR (SF-425) is due to ACF on:**

January 01 through March 31  
April 01 through June 30  
July 01 through September 30  
October 01 through December 31

April 30  
July 30  
October 30  
January 30

Fillable versions of the SF-425 form in Adobe PDF and MS-Excel formats, along with instructions, are available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms), [www.forms.gov](http://www.forms.gov), and on the [ACF Funding Opportunity website Forms](#) page.

Further instructions will be provided, as necessary, with award terms and conditions that will address specific reporting periods and due dates on an award-by-award basis. Additional information on frequency of reporting is available on the ACF Funding Opportunities web site at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/msg\\_sf425.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/msg_sf425.html).

For planning purposes, reporting periods for awards made under this announcement are as follows:

Program Progress Reports: Semi-Annually

Financial Reports: Semi-Annually

Awards issued as a result of this funding opportunity may be subject to the Transparency Act subaward and executive compensation reporting requirements of 2 C.F.R. Part 170. See ACF's [Award Term for Federal Financial Accountability and Transparency Act \(FFATA\) Subaward and Executive Compensation Reporting Requirement](#) implementing this requirement and additional award applicability information.

Submit an original and two copies of the final program/evaluation report and any program products to CB within 90 days of project end date.

## VII. Agency Contacts

### Program Office Contact

Catherine Heath  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau  
Portals Building  
1250 Maryland Avenue, SW.  
Washington, DC 20024  
Phone: (202) 690-7888  
Email: [catherine.heath@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:catherine.heath@acf.hhs.gov)

### Office of Grants Management Contact

Ben Sharp  
CB Operations Center  
c/o Lux Consulting Group  
8405 Colesville Road, Suite 600



Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: (866) 796-1591

Email: [cb@luxcg.com](mailto:cb@luxcg.com)

### **Federal Relay Service:**

Hearing-impaired and speech-impaired callers may contact the Federal Relay Service for assistance at 1-800-877-8339 (TTY - Text Telephone or ASCII - American Standard Code For Information Interchange).

## **VIII. Other Information**

**NOTICE:** ACF intends to implement all electronic application submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for applications for discretionary awards in FY 2012. For applicants without Internet access, or those without the computer capacity to upload large documents, ACF will offer a waiver procedure. In 2011, ACF will post a *Federal Register* notice soliciting public comment on the intended move to all electronic application submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) for applicants for discretionary awards.

### **Reference Websites**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the Internet <http://www.hhs.gov/>.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on the Internet <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/>.

Administration for Children and Families - ACF Funding Opportunities homepage <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/>.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (C.F.D.A.) <https://www.cfda.gov/>.

Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>.

United States Code (U.S.C) <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>.

All required Standard Forms, assurances, and certifications are available on the ACF Forms page at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants\\_resources.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html).

Grants.gov Forms Repository webpage at [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms\\_repository\\_information.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp).

Versions of other Standard Forms (SFs) are available on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Grants Management Forms web site at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants\\_forms/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_forms/).

For information regarding accessibility issues, visit the Grants.gov Accessibility Compliance Page at [http://www07.grants.gov/aboutgrants/accessibility\\_compliance.jsp](http://www07.grants.gov/aboutgrants/accessibility_compliance.jsp)

Sign up to receive notification of ACF Funding Opportunities at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email\\_subscription.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription.jsp).

## **Application Checklist**

Applicants may use the checklist below as a guide when preparing your application package.

What to Submit	Where Found	When to Submit
Central Contractor Registration (CCR)	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement. Go to <a href="http://www.ccr.gov">www.ccr.gov</a> to register.	Required for all applicants. CCR registration must be active by time of award.
DUNS Number (Universal Identifier)	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement. Go to <a href="http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform">http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform</a> to obtain DUNS Number.	Required in application submission.
SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance SF-P/PSL - Project/Performance Site Location(s)	Referenced in Section IV.2. and found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html</a> and at the Grants.gov Forms Repository at <a href="http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp">http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aforms_repository_information.jsp</a> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
SF-424A - Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs SF-424B - Assurances - Non-Construction Programs	Referenced in Section IV.2. and found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html</a> .	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
Project Description	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement.	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
Budget and Budget Justification	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.



Certification Regarding Lobbying	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement and found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html">http:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants/grants_resources.html</a> .	Submission is due prior to award.
Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants	<p>Non-profit private organizations (not including private universities) are encouraged to submit the survey with their applications. Applicants using a hard copy application, place the completed survey in an envelope labeled "Applicant Survey." Seal the envelope and include it along with the application package. Applicants applying electronically, may submit this survey along with the application.</p> <p>The survey is referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement. The survey may be found at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_resources.html">http:// www.acf.hhs.gov /grants/grants_resources.html</a>.</p>	Submission is voluntary. Submission may be made with the application or prior to award.
Protection of Human Subjects Assurance Identification/IRB Certification/Declaration of Exemption (Common Rule)	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement and available at <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/assurances/forms/index.html</a> .	Submission is due prior to award.
Project Sustainability Plan	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
Logic Model	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
Third-Party Agreements	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	If available, submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3. If not available at the

		time of application submission, due by the time of award.
Proof of Non-Profit Status	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Legal Status of Applicant Entity" in the "Project Description."	Submission is due prior to award.
Project Summary/Abstract	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.
Table of Contents	Referenced in Section IV.2. of the announcement under "Project Description."	Submission is due by the application due date found in the Overview and in Section IV.3.

## Appendices

## Appendices